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ICCO Alliance  
Working Group Religion and Education

*ICCO & Kerk in Actie*  
*Edukans*  
*Prisma*

## **The Roles of Faith-Based Educational Institutions in Conflict Transformation in Fragile States**

*Research Report*

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June 2009

This research report addresses the roles and responsibilities of faith-based educational institutions (FBEIs) in processes of conflict transformation in fragile states. It builds on insights from academic literature and an examination of expertise and policy among the members of ICCO Alliance, a coalition of Dutch, Christian development organisations. This study outlines both the achievements and the challenges that characterise the efforts of FBEIs in (post-)conflict settings. In addition, the report offers incentives for reflection and discussion, as well as openings for further research into the relationships between education, religion, and conflict transformation.

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## Executive summary

This research report investigates the roles and responsibilities of faith-based educational institutions (FBEIs) in conflict transformation in fragile states. Traditionally, FBEIs have played important roles in areas affected by violent conflict and weak government structures. As such, they significantly contribute to achieving the Education for All targets and Millennium Development Goals. Several Western development agencies, however, still adhere to secular visions on development cooperation and tend to approach religion and religious development actors with caution – despite the fact that the importance of education, for faith communities, does not only derive from the number of children attending school, but predominantly from the value system that underlies the education given. Steadily, it is acknowledged that engaging with religious actors promotes the sustainability and local embedding of development programmes, as mirrored in the Dakar Declaration that underpins the Education for All agenda.

The current study highlights both the achievements and the challenges that characterise the efforts of FBEIs in conflict-affected settings. It builds on insights from the academic world and on an examination of ICCO Alliance<sup>1</sup> expertise and policy, and addresses the following queries: *What roles do FBEIs play vis-à-vis state educational institutions and secular educational NGOs, and what responsibilities do they have in the different phases of conflict transformation? How does their access to resources (human, financial, material) change with the different phases of conflict transformation? What kind of international support do local FBEIs need in the different phases of conflict transformation?*

FBEIs generally stand out in providing education in settings where states are unable or unwilling to do so. They build on longstanding commitments towards, and a thorough embedding in, local communities, both of which are decisive to sustainable processes of conflict transformation. The religious background of FBEIs offers not only a source of resilience and determination that allows these organisations to operate under volatile circumstances, but also social capital and moral authority that is employed in political lobbying and advocacy, spiritually-based efforts at peacebuilding and reconciliation, mobilisation of communities, and the distribution of aid. Moreover, FBEIs play a role in life-skill training, raising awareness of risks to health and well-being, offering moral and spiritual relief, and supporting dialogue and cooperation between schools, communities, governments, and religious authorities. In post-conflict settings, FBEIs are responsible for in structural peacebuilding and reconciliation projects, promotion of human rights, inclusive education, and curriculum development, and the monitoring of quality education, amongst others.

In fragile and conflict-affected contexts, education is intimately related to issues of power and politics. Political elites and religious authorities, amongst others, have an interest in controlling the educational sector, since schools are sources of popular support and legitimacy, micro-level political influence, and financial benefits. Next to offering relief to communities in violent settings, FBEIs also run the risk of becoming dragged into political quests for power. Moreover, not only education, but also religion is subject of political interference. Besides drawing strength from spiritual resources, FBEIs are susceptible to become part of political and ideological conflicts that are framed along religious lines. A final observation regarding the role of FBEIs in fragile settings is the complicated character

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<sup>1</sup> ICCO Alliance is an association of Dutch, Christian development organisations that engage in partnership relations with FBEIs in a variety of (post-)conflict settings across Africa, Asia, and Latin-America.

inherent to transitional phases of conflict transformation, in which educational responsibilities are gradually transferred to state institutions. The resulting redistribution of support may be subject of friction between donor agencies, state institutions, and FBEIs.

To international development agencies, FBEIs may be the sole potential partner organisations capable of providing basic services and stimulating development in conflict-affected areas. Supporting FBEIs is a promising means to address the large out-of-school population in conflict-affected countries, who lag furthest behind in achieving the Millennium Development Goals. International support can be conferred in terms of financial aid, capacity building programmes, specialised expertise on quality education, stimulation and facilitation of inter- and intra-faith dialogue, and lobby and advocacy. Literature warns that religious donor organisations, which explicitly act out of compassion with the poor, may be distracted from assessing the real needs of communities and from executing a thorough assessment of the impact of their interventions. It is therefore advised to separate (religious) motives from the intended outcomes impact and employ demand-driven development strategies, which imply a reciprocal dialogue between givers and receivers of aid. ICCO Alliance is responsive to this critique as it employs its religious identity as an asset to engage in equal and long-term partnerships with FBEIs. Moreover, ICCO Alliance has devised extensive tools for context analysis in order to base its programmes on needs that are locally articulated. Future research may scrutinise the actual impact of the ICCO Alliance approach in fragile settings, the implications of transferring educational responsibilities to state institutions, the religious contribution to peace education programmes, and the effectiveness of current context analysis tools in the field of education.

## 1. Introduction and relevance of this study

‘Fragile states’ are countries that face particularly severe development challenges such as poor governance, weak institutional capabilities, political instability, and often a legacy of violent conflict. Under such circumstances, education is widely assumed to be beneficial to processes of conflict transformation, peacebuilding and development. However, as a result of failing or absent state institutions, schools in fragile states usually depend on non-state resources to be able to carry out their educational duties. Regularly, they are supported by local churches, mosques, NGOs, or faith-based educational institutions (FBEIs). Frequently, FBEIs are the last organisations that remain operational in the educational sector in conflict-affected areas. In South Sudan, for example, government structures have remained weak after the end of the civil war, as a result which most schools continue to be run by churches. As such, FBEIs play a crucial role in processes of conflict transformation and development and serve as promising partners for Western development and donor organisations.

The benignity of FBEIs in fragile states, however, is not uncontested. Since both religion and education are subject to quests for power and influence in conflict zones, FBEIs may (inadvertently) become part of ideological and political struggles. Consequently, their services come to be perceived as sustaining particular goals, which may eventually intensify social segregation and conflict. Avoiding involvement in such conditions will be a priority of any development organisation.

FBEIs, thus, operate in complex and highly politicised contexts that may not always allow them to fulfil constructive roles. Development agencies and donors, in turn, face dilemmas as to whether to engage in partnerships with FBEIs in fragile states, under what conditions, how to mitigate their potential negative social impact, and how to effectively facilitate conflict transformation and development through the educational sector. The current research delineates how these dilemmas resonate among the members of the ICCO Alliance. Based on a desk study that was commissioned by the ICCO Alliance working group Religion and Education,<sup>2</sup> this research report serves three objectives: first, to stimulate reflection on policy and practice among the members of the ICCO Alliance Educational Programme;<sup>3</sup> second, to contribute to discussion with other organisations and platforms in the field of education and conflict transformation; and third, to set out directions for further research.

### 1.1 Aim of the study and research questions

This research has been guided by the following research questions:<sup>4</sup>

*1. What roles do FBEIs play vis-à-vis state educational institutions and secular educational NGOs, and what responsibilities do they have in the different phases of conflict transformation? How does their access to resources (human, financial, material) change with the different phases of conflict transformation? What kind of international support do local FBEIs need in the different phases of conflict transformation?*

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<sup>2</sup> The ICCO Alliance consists of ICCO, Kerk in Actie, Edukans, Oikocredit, Prisma, and Share People. The Educational Programme is made up of ICCO & Kerkinactie, Edukans, and Prisma. Prisma, in turn, is an association of Christian development organisations, among which ZOA, Red een Kind, and Woord en Daad.

<sup>3</sup> This study contributes to the ICCO Alliance thematic focus area Education in (Post-)conflict areas. See the ‘Education’ section in ‘ICCO Alliance Operational Plan 2007-2010’ (ICCO Alliance 2007).

<sup>4</sup> ICCO Alliance working group Religion and Education 2008.

*2. To what extent do local FBEIs enhance particular knowledge, attitudes and/or skills that are needed for peacebuilding and good citizenship in conflict transformation in fragile states? Are there any differences in this respect between FBEIs of different religious, denominational and/or confessional backgrounds? What kind of international support do FBEIs need to enhance their capacities to promote peacebuilding and good citizenship?*

These questions refer to two distinct, though ultimately strongly interrelated subjects of interest. The current report prioritises addressing the first set of questions, thereby providing the basis for a follow-up research that will entail a more elaborate focus on the second cluster.

### *1.2 Definitions*

Faith-based educational organisations (FBEIs) are (formal and non-formal) educational institutions or schools, founded and administered by faith-based organisations (FBOs) or religious non-governmental organisations (RNGOs). FBOs are development organisations that have a specific religious background and one or more of the following characteristics: (1) affiliation with a religious body, (2) a mission statement with explicit reference to religious values, (3) financial support from religious sources, and/or (4) a governance structure where selection of board members or staff is based on religious beliefs or affiliation, and where decision-making is based on religious values. Churches, temples, mosques, etc. are also considered FBOs. RNGOs are defined as ‘formal organizations whose identity and mission are self-consciously derived from the teaching of one or more religious or spiritual traditions and which operates on a non-profit, independent, voluntary basis to promote and realize collectively articulated ideas about the public good at the public good at the national or international level’.<sup>5</sup>

The focus on education in this report is limited to basic education, which includes ‘a whole range of educational activities that take place in different settings and that aim to meet basic learning needs as defined in the World Declaration on Education for All (Jomtien, Thailand, 1990). It thus comprises both formal schooling (primary and sometimes lower secondary) as well as a wide variety of non-formal and informal public and private educational activities offered to meet the defined basic learning needs of groups of people of all ages’. Formal education is defined as ‘education provided in the system of schools, colleges, universities and other formal educational institutions that normally constitutes a continuous 'ladder' of full-time education for children and young people, generally beginning at age five, six or seven and continuing up to 20 or 25 years of age. Formal basic education usually comprises the primary school grades, but may include also additional grades (e.g. lower secondary schooling) that are considered "basic". Non-formal education refers to ‘any organized and sustained educational activities that do not correspond exactly to the above definition of formal education. Non-formal education may take place both within and outside educational institutions, and may cater to persons of all ages. Depending on country contexts, it may cover educational programmes to impart adult literacy, basic education for out-of-school children, life-skills, work-skills, and general culture. Non-formal education programmes do not necessarily follow the 'ladder' system, may have varying durations, and may or may not confer certification of the learning achieved’.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Berger 2003.

<sup>6</sup> ICCO Alliance 2008.



Religion connects humans to the sacred, which may be conceived as either a singular God, the divine, powers, spirits or demons, gods in plural, or something non-personal. Religions entail certain structural elements: an accommodating narrative or myth, media through which to connect to the sacred, morals, cult, and rites.<sup>7</sup> Ter Haar and Busuttil distinguish four components of religion: (1) religious ideas (the 'content' of faith), (2) religious practices (ritual behaviour), (3) social organisation (the religious community), and (4) religious or spiritual experiences (psychic attitudes).<sup>8</sup> This study predominantly relates to the third constituent.

Fragile states are countries that are unable or unwilling to 'provide physical security, legitimate political institutions, sound economic management and social services for the benefit of its population'.<sup>9</sup> Generally, fragile states are characterised by weak institutional capacities, poor governance, political instability, and on-going or recent violent conflict.<sup>10</sup> In 'Our Common Concern', the policy note on Dutch development cooperation (2007-2011), fragile states feature as one of the main policy concerns as 'those countries are lagging furthest behind on the Millennium Development Goals' (see 2.1).<sup>11</sup>

Conflict transformation aims at truly achieving positive peace.<sup>12</sup> Conflict transformation is a strategy that not only aims to end violence and change negative relationships between conflicting parties, but also to alter political, economic, and social structures that cause such negative relationships. It seeks to empower people to become involved in non-violent processes of change and to help build sustainable conditions for peace and justice.<sup>13</sup>

### 1.3 Methodological approach

This report is based on a desk study that was carried out between November 2008 and May 2009 by Erik van Ommering (MSc, VU University Amsterdam). The study involved interviews with ICCO Alliance representatives in the field of education and/or conflict transformation, a review of (internal) policy and evaluation reports, as well as an exploration of relevant academic literature. In addition, this report capitalises on a prior ICCO Alliance study on the interaction between religion and education, which was commissioned by the working group Religion and Education in 2007 and involved field studies with partner organisations in Albania, Bangladesh, Bolivia, and Uganda. Finally, this report links up with on-going research by the Knowledge Centre Religion and Development and the Knowledge Forum Religion and Development Cooperation. The conference 'Religion, Conflict, and Development in Fragile States', which was organised by the Knowledge Centre in November 2008, offered stimulating insights for this report.

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<sup>7</sup> Van der Kooi 2005. In the realm of academic studies on religion, Clifford Geertz' theory of religion is leading (*Religion as a Cultural System*, 1973). An important critique of Geertz' work has been formulated by Talal Asad (*The Construction of Religion as an Anthropological Theory*, 1982).

<sup>8</sup> Ter Haar and Busuttil 2005, p. 22.

<sup>9</sup> Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD 2006).

<sup>10</sup> International Development Association 2007.

<sup>11</sup> The Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs has defined the following countries as 'fragile states': Afghanistan, Burundi, Colombia\*, DR Congo, Guatemala, Kosovo, Pakistan, the Palestinian Territories, and *Sudan\** (Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2007). States facing actual or potential security challenges include Bangladesh\*, *India (Assam)*, *Thailand (border with Myanmar)*, *Bolivia\**, *Ethiopia\**, *Liberia*, Yemen, Rwanda, *Uganda\**, and Sri Lanka. Countries marked with \* are focus countries of the ICCO Alliance. The ICCO Alliance Educational Programme operates in the countries that are marked in *italics*. See also 4.1.

<sup>12</sup> See ICCO & Kerk in Actie 2008a.

<sup>13</sup> ICCO & Kerk in Actie 2008b.

## 2. Background of this study

### 2.1 Education in fragile states

Around 75 million children have no access to quality basic education. In sub-Saharan Africa, nearly one-third of the primary-school-age children is not enrolled in schooling. Half of the number of children who remain out of school (37 million) lives in fragile states (see appendix 2). As a result of ‘years of neglect, political strife within countries and lack of resources’, governments in these countries are unable or unwilling to provide basic services such as education. Girls are particularly affected by a lack of safe schools, increased violence, and disrupted social, economic and family structures. Today, girls account for 55 percent of the world’s out-of-school population.<sup>14</sup>

Education is widely considered a precondition for development and a key to promote lasting peace and stability. Schooling and literacy are indispensable requisites for effective participation in today’s globalised societies and economies. Hence, education has been defined a fundamental human right.<sup>15</sup> By means of the Education For All (EFA) agenda and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the international community has committed itself to providing universal primary education to boys and girls by the year 2015.<sup>16</sup> Meeting the EFA and MDG targets in conflict-affected countries requires a great deal of work and dedication on the part of donors and development agencies.

The Dakar declaration, which constitutes the basis for the EFA agenda, explicitly acknowledges the important role of FBEIs in settings where state educational provision is insufficient or absent.<sup>17</sup> The declaration assumes that FBEIs are particularly successful in fragile states since they are ‘flexible, innovative, and closer to local communities and local cultures’.<sup>18</sup> The current report outlines the opportunities and challenges that the ICCO Alliance and its partner FBEIs face in their mission to contribute to achieving education for all in fragile states.

### 2.2 Religion and development

Another core subject that underpins the current report is the role of religion and FBOs in the field of international development. Until the 1990s, Western governments and development agencies mostly propagated a secular, market-driven approach to development.<sup>19</sup> Particularly in the wake of the September 11 attacks and in the context of the subsequent War on Terror, the relationship between religion and development has become subject of increasing debate.<sup>20</sup> Partly, this is due to an inability or unwillingness of mostly Western actors to acknowledge that a separation between ‘religion’ and ‘worldly affairs’, as the West has seen since the Enlightenment, is not a universal aspiration. Conversely, in many non-Western societies, faith is inseparably intertwined with other aspects of life, including politics and development. Separating religion and development, thus, is unfruitful or even derogatory.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Save the Children 2008; Unesco EFA Global Monitoring Report 2009. Sudan and DR Congo are not included in these statistics as a result of data shortage. Cf. UN 2008.

<sup>15</sup> Verbeek 2008.

<sup>16</sup> The Dakar Framework for Action (World Education Forum 2000). See also [www.un.org/millenniumgoals](http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals).

<sup>17</sup> The Dakar Framework for Action (World Education Forum 2000).

<sup>18</sup> Haynes 2008, pp. 180-1.

<sup>19</sup> Haynes 2008.

<sup>20</sup> Bouta *et al.* 2005; Iqbal and Siddiqui 2008.

<sup>21</sup> Cf. Haynes 2008.

Consequently, Western development agencies will have to pursue a thorough understanding and appreciation of the interconnectedness between religion and development in non-Western settings, and to functionally and fruitfully embed this understanding in relationships with partner organisations in the South. Departing from this dilemma, the ICCO Alliance, the Knowledge Centre Religion and Development, and the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, amongst others, have engaged in a variety of efforts to examine the complex relationship between religion and development. The present outlines ICCO Alliance expertise regarding the roles of FBEIs in fragile states in order to promote further reflection, discussion, and research in this field.

### *2.3 The initiator of this study: ICCO Alliance*

The ICCO Alliance Education Programme<sup>22</sup> is a joint effort by ICCO & Kerk in Actie, Edukans and Prisma. These Netherlands-based, Christian development organisations collaborate with a variety of partner organisations in the South to improve the accessibility, quality, and relevance of basic education in concord with the Education for All objectives and the MDGs.

In 2006 and 2007, four Christian partner organisations of the ICCO Alliance were examined during a field visit aimed at highlighting the relationship between religion and education. These case studies, conducted in Uganda, Albania, Bolivia, and Bangladesh, showed that ‘religion (here: Christian religion) can and often does play a positive role in education’, because (1) shared beliefs strongly interlink people and organisations, (2) teachers and managers find inspiration in Christian faith and principles, and (3) shared beliefs inspire people to organise themselves and jointly pursue Christian values.

The synthesis report that evolved from these studies, stressed that religion should not be approached exclusively as a connection to the sacred, but also, and importantly, as a social and political connector. It also noted that ‘the relationship between religion and education cannot be described in uniform characteristics’ since the nature of this relationship is highly context-dependent. The report briefly mentions a potential negative aspect of FBEIs, namely, ‘the danger of conservative forces and fanatics’. This risk is exemplified by FBEIs that deject the use of condoms in HIV/Aids affected areas. Furthermore, the report shows that gender sensitivity tends to have little priority among FBEIs. These ‘conservative’ stances, it is argued, should be counterbalanced by focussing on human dignity and the right to education.<sup>23</sup>

Departing from the observation that ‘religion can and often does play a positive role in education’, the ICCO Alliance working group Religion and Education issued the current study in order to gain insight into the roles of FBEIs in the context of fragile states, with a particular focus on their responsibilities in processes of conflict transformation.<sup>24</sup> The following chapters will address the main research questions from various angles: first, relevant academic literature will be discussed. Second, current policy and expertise within the ICCO Alliance will be examined, based on interviews and a desk study. Third, an overview will be given of studies by development agencies other than the ICCO Alliance, such as the Knowledge Centre Religion and Development and the Safe the Children Alliance. The report concludes by discussing the findings and by proposing openings for further research.

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<sup>22</sup> ICCO Alliance 2006.

<sup>23</sup> Verbeek 2008.

<sup>24</sup> This research direction was instigated at a March 2008 seminar during which the synthesis report (Verbeek 2008) was presented.

### 3. Academic perspectives on FBEIs and conflict transformation in fragile states

Academic literature reflects an increasing interest in the relationship between religion and development, and several academic institutes in the Netherlands have engaged in studies in this field.<sup>25</sup> The current chapter highlights relevant insights that derive from studies into the role of education in conflict transformation in fragile states. Implications for policy making and evaluation, as well as openings for further research, are listed in chapter 6.

#### 3.1 Education and conflict transformation

To understand the role of education in settings of violent conflict, it is necessary to go beyond regular representations of schooling as inherently benign and peace-inducing. Instead of neutral spaces, schools are politicised institutions where pupils' loyalties are directed towards particular norms, values, authorities, modes of behaviour, and abstract identifications.<sup>26</sup> Besides this instrumentalist perspective on education, schooling has also been depicted as embodying a power in itself, as it may foster ideas that challenge dominant perspectives and power regimes.<sup>27</sup> As such, the potential role of schools in processes of conflict transformation becomes evident.

In conflict-affected settings, education may dampen conflict, nurture and sustain inter-ethnic tolerance, desegregate the mind, cultivate inclusive concepts of citizenship, disarm history, and serve as a means to counter state oppression.<sup>28</sup> Since schools are exempted from military action under international humanitarian law,<sup>29</sup> they offer safe spaces and venues to monitor child health and well-being. At schools, teachers can convey life skills such as landmine awareness and offer psychosocial support, while community members can congregate to share their emotions and for mutual support.<sup>30</sup>

Besides such merits, education may also have adverse implications on societies. Schooling may be used to facilitate the spread of polarised identifications and views that legitimise the use of violence. Accordingly, education may become complicit in the repression of minorities, the preservation of inequalities, and the reinforcement of divisions and hatred amongst communities.<sup>31</sup>

#### 3.2 Faith-based educational institutions in fragile states

Education is considered of vital importance in Islamic, Christian, Hindu, as well as Buddhist traditions. Religious schools, such as Islamic *madrasas* and church-founded schools play constructive roles in development and conflict transformation, unless their teachings are of an extremist character and, consequently, promote religious intolerance. Faith-based political movements may seek to 'use education as a means to advance a more general religiously or ideologically motivated agenda'. In India for example, the Hindutva educational

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<sup>25</sup> For example: the VU Institute for the Study of Religion, Culture, and Society (VISOR, [www.visor.vu.nl](http://www.visor.vu.nl)), the Institute of Social Studies (ISS, [www.iss.nl](http://www.iss.nl)), University of Groningen, Faculty of Theology and Religious Studies ([www.rug.nl/ggw](http://www.rug.nl/ggw)), Wageningen University ([www.disasterstudies.wur.nl](http://www.disasterstudies.wur.nl)), and the IS Academy.

<sup>26</sup> Bourdieu and Passeron 1977.

<sup>27</sup> Gramsci in Arnove 1977, p. 142.

<sup>28</sup> Bush and Saltarelli 2000.

<sup>29</sup> Schools' immunity at times of conflict has become increasingly problematic as a result of non-state parties' involvement in contemporary armed conflicts. Often, non-state parties are not formally bound to international codes of conduct in warfare (see [www.genevacall.org](http://www.genevacall.org)).

<sup>30</sup> Machel 2001.

<sup>31</sup> Smith and Vaux 2003; Dicum 2008, p. 634; Van Ommering 2007.

campaign attempted to 'rewrite historical textbooks to highlight the achievements of Hindus or, as critics argue, to distort history to promote Hindu communalism'. As such, political movements adopt religion and religious education as an instrument to enlarge their power basis, as a result of which social inequality and intolerance are stimulated.<sup>32</sup>

On the other hand, Buddhist FBEIs in Sri Lanka and Cambodia continue to play a vital role in conflict transformation in the wake of, and during, violent conflicts. They do not only contribute to achieving development goals, but also help to overcome communities' fears and sense of powerlessness. Accordingly, FBEIs increase local capacities to resolve problems of poverty. This social empowerment is 'a process that begins and ends with education' and shows 'how religion and spirituality can serve as a basic resource for and in development. The Buddhist movements' aim is to make human life more meaningful – both for the giver and the receiver'.<sup>33</sup>

Jeffrey Haynes discerns three elements that define the success of peacebuilding programmes by FBEIs in fragile states. Firstly, the way in which FBEIs define the aims of education determines their legitimacy and support among communities. Is schooling simply meant 'for the purpose of achieving growing numbers of people to take part in economic development through skills accreditation?' Or is it also about 'increasing diversity and tolerance, enhancing the value placed on sharing and non-violence?' Tyndale notes that 'for people from faith communities it cannot be only a question of the number of children attending school. Of paramount importance to them is the content of the curriculum and above all the value system, implicit or explicit, underlying the education given. Very many of them abhor the idea of turning schools into individualistic, competitive, largely technical training grounds with jobs alone in mind'.<sup>34</sup>

Secondly, the political context of schooling has major implications for its role in promoting stability in (post-)conflict zones. Education is intrinsically linked to issues of power and politics, as argued earlier. 'Whoever controls children's education is in an unrivalled position not only to proselytise but also to inculcate particular social and political worldviews'. Some governments, therefore, do not welcome faith initiatives in the field of education 'because there is an unacceptable political dimension to such a partnership'. Problems may also arise when FBOs from different faith communities compete for a licence to provide schooling in certain regions, for example when fast-expanding religions claim their share of political influence at the cost of traditionally dominant religions.

Thirdly, the particular historical context of education produces perceptions of schooling that inform the attitudes towards, and the legitimacy of, new or altered forms and providers of education. In many former colonies, FBEIs have played a longstanding role in the provision of education. During the colonial era, 'this enabled churches to acquire not only ideological and material power, but also financial resources'. After colonialism, 'many African governments sought to oust churches from their leading position because the former came to realise that education was a core "development good", over which governments could exercise control in order to ensure that educational benefits went to preferred constituencies and not others'. However, despite initial attempts by states to gain control over education, they often handed back control to churches after some years as they realised their inability to adequately run schooling.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Haynes 2008.

<sup>33</sup> Haynes 2008.

<sup>34</sup> Tyndale 2004, quoted in Haynes 2008, p. 176.

<sup>35</sup> Haynes 2008, pp. 181-84; 189.

Haynes concludes that ‘faith-based education is particularly valuable in the face of declining or absent state ability to provide an adequate educational service’. Faith-based education constitutes not only a source of resilience and hope for both children and adults, but also offers a social structure through which people can organise themselves and find comport under stressful circumstances. In non-Western contexts, secular forms of education tend to be nonviable when its target community is not convinced that schooling provides both formal educational opportunities, but also a significant concern with religious and cultural values.

### *3.3 Religion, FBOs, and donor relationships*

For long, development theory typically avoided engagement with religion as a result of ‘the modernist assumption that religion will disappear once people become economically advanced, and a new-found rationality supersedes ‘primitive superstition’ and ‘backward’ religious worldviews’.<sup>36</sup> Since this modernist paradigm has proven untrue in the face of today’s global religious resurgence,<sup>37</sup> the study of the relationship between religion and development has recently intensified. As a result, development agencies now increasingly acknowledge that religious actors and values are not inherent obstacles to development, but rather assets that, indeed, show a considerable degree of overlap with human rights ethics.<sup>38</sup> In practice, this means that ‘religious traditions and faith-based organisations can [...] promote social capital through linking people together in a common belief as well as supporting initiatives that generate “higher levels of education, literacy, health, employment and other public goods that increase social opportunity”’.<sup>39</sup> As a result, FBOs are now seen as indispensable to the world of development cooperation, which is reflected by the inclusion of FBEIs in agreements as prominent as the EFA declaration.

Academic literature brings forward two main characteristics of FBOs as opposed to mainstream (secular) development initiatives: firstly, their embedding in local communities, and secondly, their long-term commitment to development projects. Bradley criticises mainstream development agencies for their lack of ‘community participation in project planning and implementation’. Donors tend to ignore ‘the knowledge possessed by local people about their environment’ in their demands for maximal impact and replication of projects. ‘This places pressure on an NGO to produce results quickly and cheaply’.<sup>40</sup> The lack of community participation is reinforced ‘when external agencies send in “experts” from outside who often fail to consult the poor and consequently make mistakes’.<sup>41</sup> Sustained development, therefore, ‘is expensive and requires extensive time commitments’, while ‘effective development is responsive to people’s “real needs”’.<sup>42</sup> It is argued that FBOs tend to comply with these requirements sooner than secular NGOs.

The long-term commitment and local embedding of FBOs is rooted in ‘an elaborate symbolic narrative that stresses forging of bonds between those that have and those that are without’. Secular NGOs, on the other hand, sooner tend ‘to accept insurmountable difficulties preventing successful results and leave a community in order to move to the next’, as Bradley argues. Based on studies by Tyndale and Harcourt, he shows that the

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<sup>36</sup> Tomalin 2006.

<sup>37</sup> Haynes 2008, p. 212.

<sup>38</sup> Tomalin 2006.

<sup>39</sup> Candland in Tomalin 2006, p. 96.

<sup>40</sup> Chambers in Bradley 2005, p. 338.

<sup>41</sup> Haynes 2007, p. 181.

<sup>42</sup> Chambers in Bradley 2005, p. 338.

spirituality of members of faith-based NGOs 'acts as a vital source of commitment and motivation'. Tyndale finds that 'faith groups are more firmly rooted or have better networks in poor communities than the non-religious ones and that religious leaders are trusted more than any others. Faith-based organisations are thus seen as essential agents both for influencing the opinions and attitudes of their followers and for carrying out development work at the grassroots'.<sup>43</sup>

The drawback of this perceived strong relationship with the poor is that feelings of compassion 'can result in a blindness which prevents NGO workers from really seeing the local people they claim to want to help'. Bradley warns that 'compassion alone cannot bring good results. In fact, projects fuelled by compassion alone have limited impact. Compassion operates through symbolic projections of an objectified image of suffering. In order for compassion to be expressed it must be directed towards an object of pity. In the context of the developing world an image of the undeveloped Other has emerged. This symbolic construction of Other blocks the potential for direct dialogue with target communities and groups. The relationship is one-sided in that the compassionate being is attempting to communicate with a fictitious image created by them for the purpose of fulfilling their religious obligation'.<sup>44</sup> Consequently, Bradley argues, FBOs may fail to critically assess their results 'because it was assumed that since their actions were motivated by compassion they would bring good results and benefit the less fortunate'.

Bradley offers an example of the way in which a British Christian development organisation portrayed young, poor, veiled women in the Indian state of Rajasthan as weak, oppressed, and vulnerable. In-depth research, however, dispelled this myth of weakness and passiveness and disclosed how feelings of compassion had produced a distorted image of social reality, as mirrored in an image of an Other who would never reach a post-suffering state. In the Rajasthan case, projects that arose from compassion were never problematised, since they were assumed to be good. Bradley was met with difficulties when he criticised 'those who claim to act because of their deep-felt love for others'. However, 'criticisms must be made not least because those the NGOs claim to care for are mere figments in their imaginations. NGOs direct their concern towards an Other that they have created in order to express empathy. Such imaginary objects block the existence of people with real needs and therefore must be deconstructed' because these are 'counterproductive in the quest to forge meaningful dialogue between a giver and a receiver of aid'.<sup>45</sup>

Development aid relationships become ethically problematic when processes of giving are not concerned with what the receiver actually desires. At best, giving implies conditionality, 'while at worst the gift may become a form of patronage and a means of control'. From this perspective, Stirrat and Henkel raise concerns over the role of FBOs, whose efforts may not only entail conditionality but also a requirement of the Other to convert to a particular belief system.<sup>46</sup> Bradley, then, proposes a reciprocal dialogue between giver and the receiver, implying that the giver lets go of any desire to transform the Other and realises the potential for its own growth through dialogue with Others.

Concluding, Western donor organisations should engage with the religious lives of local people, since 'the religious beliefs and rituals of these communities reveal a lot about their concerns and hopes for the future'. FBOs should carefully reflect on their motivations,

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<sup>43</sup> Bradley 2005.

<sup>44</sup> Tyndale, quoted in Bradley 2005, p. 341.

<sup>45</sup> Bradley 2005.

<sup>46</sup> In Bradley 2005, p. 342.

since ‘compassion is good but must be combined with a willingness to reflect on the impact of action and a desire to really get to know those towards whom aid is directed’. *Motives*, rooted in compassion, and the *impact* of an NGOs actions on others should be separated, in order to forge successful partnerships between those able to give and those willing to receive.<sup>47</sup>

### 3.4 Conclusions

In conflict-affected countries, religious organisations generally have a long tradition of involvement in the educational sector. During colonial times, churches often took up the responsibility for schooling. In countries like Afghanistan and Pakistan, education in *madrasas* has been closely related to religious institutions. Today, FBOs continue to play a crucial role in providing schooling where states fail to do so. Importantly, outside the West, social and political life in general is characterised by a tight relationship with religion and religious institutions. Confronted with a widespread religious revival and a growing awareness that secularist perspectives on development have no universal validity, Western development agencies and governments have come to realise that employing a strategy of development cooperation that ignores religion and fails to engage with religious actors, tends to be unsustainable. Consequently, ways have been explored to incorporate religious, cultural, and existential values into policy and practice, as a result of which concepts such as ‘human security’ and ‘development with a human face’ came to flourish.

Notwithstanding an intuitive sense of the constructive character of FBEIs in conflict transformation, even religious donors and development organisations such as the ICCO Alliance are uncertain about the actual roles and responsibilities of FBEIs in fragile states. A study of academic resources raised the following insights:

- Faith-based education offers a source of relief, resilience and hope for conflict-affected communities, as well as a well-embedded organising and mobilising structure.
- In conflict-affected countries, FBEIs are often the last providers of schooling after other educational institutions have waned. In post-colonial settings, FBEIs’ long tradition in providing education should be acknowledged. When this longstanding involvement, which involves a thorough embedding in communities, a settled moral authority, and a financial resource, is challenged in the process of transferring educational responsibilities to the state, this may cause friction.
- The ultimate presence of FBEIs in fragile settings can be explained by referring to (1) a long historical involvement in the educational sector, (2) a thorough embedding in local communities, (3) intrinsic motivations that allow faith actors to operate under highly demanding circumstances, and (4) a tendency of relative long-term commitments to development projects that characterise FBOs in general.
- Schools in conflict-affected settings offer safe spaces where children can develop themselves, child well-being can be monitored, life skills can be taught, constructive and tolerant attitudes can be fostered, and communities can congregate for mutual support. Education plays a core role in fundamental, long-term processes of conflict transformation and peace building.
- Particularly in fragile states, however, education is closely related to issues of power and politics. Governments, religious authorities, development actors, FBOs, and others have an interest in controlling education, since schools are important resources of popular

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<sup>47</sup> Bradley 2005.



support, funding, and influence. Changing power relationships may result in schools and FBEIs to become dragged into political issues. FBEIs' involvement in education means that they operate in highly politicised contexts that complicate their neutrality, both during a conflict and in its aftermath.

- In contemporary violent conflicts, ethnic and religious identity becomes intertwined with political struggles, which may have dreadful implications (as witnessed e.g. in Rwanda and the former Yugoslavia in the 1990s). When religious authorities become engulfed in conflict, they may drag along local FBEIs.
- Most, if not all, major religious traditions deem education of high importance, and religious education plays a constructive role in achieving development goals. Importantly, to faith communities, education is only relevant when it includes and contributes to a particular system of religious and cultural values, besides serving formal educational targets such as literacy. Only by acknowledging this value component in schooling, donors can sustainably support educational initiatives in the South. Accordingly, FBEIs can significantly contribute to achieving EFA targets and MDGs.
- Engaging with religion and religious actors enhances the chances for success of development programmes, as long as this engagement is based on the needs and expectations of the receivers of aid instead of donor-defined conditions. FBOs tend to be well-embedded and committed to serving particular communities on a long-term basis, but also run the risk of turning a blind eye to the actual needs of local people, as well as to fail to critically assess the impact of their efforts. Therefore, FBOs need to separate their motives from the impact of their interventions.

A discussion of the implications of these conclusions for ICCO Alliance, as well as openings for further research, will be outlined in chapter 6.

The religious background of development agencies such as the ICCO Alliance can be a vital connecting asset to engage in a reciprocal dialogue and establish fruitful relationships with FBOs and FBEIs in the South. The next chapter delves into the ICCO Alliance's expertise and policy with regard to FBEIs in conflict-affected countries.

## 4. Expertise outside the ICCO Alliance

This chapter covers relevant research in the field of religion, education, and conflict as conducted by development agencies other than the ICCO Alliance.

### 4.1 Knowledge Centre Religion and Development<sup>48</sup>

The Knowledge Centre for Religion and Development is an association of Dutch development organisations (including ICCO) that studies the role of religion in development and disperses its knowledge among development agencies, political and public bodies, media, and academic institutions. In June 2008, Dutch development and peacebuilding professionals discussed the 'risks and resources' of religion in fragile states. No special reference was made to the educational sector, but the following outcomes are nevertheless relevant in the context of this report:<sup>49</sup>

- Religion and religious institutions play a decisive role in fragile states as sole securers of social cohesion and providers of basic services;
- Religion and religious actors may be related to ethnic and political conflicts by their involvement in quests for power and authority, and involvement in corruption;
- It may be difficult for FBOs to acknowledge the potential disparaging role of religion;
- Religious authorities and values may foster processes of conflict transformation and act as local 'agents of change'. However, this should happen on their own grounds, not on Western principles of peacebuilding;
- Dutch FBOs may employ their religious networks to facilitate mobilisation and cooperation among religious actors elsewhere.
- In post-conflict settings, FBOs that provided education during a conflict should be given appropriate credit for their work.

In November 2008, the Knowledge Centre organised an international conference on religion, conflict, and development in fragile states. Guest speakers from partner organisations in Afghanistan, Israel, the Palestinian Territories, and the Great Lakes Region shed their light on the role of religion in their work and on the relationships with Dutch donor and development agencies. The main outcomes of the conference were:<sup>50</sup>

- The values, norms, and virtues that FBOs foster, are sources of social capital and constructive change.
- Religious schools, for instance Islamic *madrassas*, can offer quality education and serve as channels for grass root-level interventions;
- FBOs are relevant partners to Dutch NGOs because of their network of religious authority, their authentic and socially embedded nature, and their reliability that derives from long-term commitments;
- FBOs may also be problematic partners to Dutch NGOs since religious affiliation and authority may be dividing forces in society, and religious leaders may act just as partisan or corrupted as secular leaders.

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<sup>48</sup> Website Knowledge Centre Religion and Development: [www.religie-en-ontwikkeling.nl](http://www.religie-en-ontwikkeling.nl).

<sup>49</sup> Knowledge Centre Religion and Development 2008a.

<sup>50</sup> Knowledge Centre Religion and Development 2008b.

Regarding the relationships between Dutch NGOs and FBOs in fragile states, the conference participants recommended to:

- Strive for better understanding of the role of religion in development and include religion in context analyses. (The Israeli representative noted that the Oslo Peace Treaty failed because ‘God was not included’);
- Avoid essentialising religion by envisioning religion as strongly interrelated with political, economic, and social aspects of life in non-Western societies;
- Acknowledge the diversity within religious movements: some members may be more open for discussion than others;
- Do not exclude relevant, though perhaps radical actors from involvement in peacebuilding processes;
- Local development initiatives can be supported by engaging in a political lobby in the Netherlands that also involves diplomatic posts, which may be valuable partners to local NGOs and FBOs;
- Facilitate intra- and inter-religious debate, as well as relationships with secular parties and groups that local NGOs disagree with.

#### *4.2 Knowledge Forum Religion and Development Cooperation*

The Knowledge Forum Religion and Development Cooperation (not to be confused with the Knowledge Centre Religion and Development) is a joint initiative of the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs (DGIS) and several Dutch NGOs in the field of development cooperation and peacebuilding. In early 2008, the Forum decided to organise a policy dialogue on religion and fragile states, which are spearheads of current development policy .

The Ministry has set up a Unit Fragility and Peacebuilding, and drafted a policy plan on fragile states,<sup>51</sup> which contains no explicit reference to religion or FBOs. This policy plan has been discussed at an April 2009 meeting of Minister Koenders and representatives of NGOs (including ICCO), during which the latter were assured that the government is not excluding cooperation with religious actors. Moreover, the Minister is interested in exploring where, when, and how religion plays a role in fragile states, and the ways in which the positive aspects of religious organisations can be strengthen, while simultaneously neutralising religion’s negative implications. The dialogue as facilitated by the Knowledge Forum will be continued in the near future.

#### *4.3 Save the Children*

The international Save the Children Alliance<sup>52</sup> has a leading role in advocating for education in conflict-affected countries. It’s global campaign ‘Rewrite the Future’ calls on governments and international agencies to put policies and resources in place to provide quality education for all children, particularly in regions affected by armed conflict. ‘In populations emerging from conflict, quality education can build social capital by strengthening connections between schools and communities, bridging ethnic divisions and accelerating development’.<sup>53</sup> The 2008 ‘Last in Line, Last in School’ report notes that the international community still fails to ‘prioritise support to education in those countries furthest from

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<sup>51</sup> ‘Veiligheid en ontwikkeling in fragiele staten. Strategie voor de Nederlandse inzet 2008-2011’ (November 2008, The Hague). Designated fragile states are Afghanistan, Burundi, Colombia, DR Congo, Guatemala, Kosovo, Pakistan, Palestinian Territories, and Sudan. URL: <http://ikregeer.nl/document/KST124834>.

<sup>52</sup> Website Save the Children: [www.savethechildren.net](http://www.savethechildren.net).

<sup>53</sup> Save the Children 2009.

achieving the Millennium Development Goals: conflict-affected states'. The report recommends to increase long-term predictable aid for education in conflict-affected states, and to include education as part of humanitarian policy and response.<sup>54</sup>

In March 2009, Save the Children organised a conference in Sarajevo that addressed the 'pivotal role of education for lasting peace'. This meeting underlined the need to include education in peace negotiations and agreements, including 'the pressing need for teacher replacements and skills training, fund for school supplies and reconstruction of damaged infrastructure, and the introduction of essential peace education curriculum that reinforces reconciliation, tolerance and respect'. The report notes that the loss of teachers and education experts is part of the price often paid in violent conflicts. Teachers may be targeted by violence, migrate and eventually not return. Hence, 'recruiting, training, and paying educators and teachers will frequently be an early post-conflict priority'. Moreover, post-conflict education requires a quality curriculum that 'needs to deal frankly with the shared history of the parties of the peace agreement, so that young people will know what happened, while accommodating different points of view and promoting tolerance'.

The report recommends to civil society actors to monitor education's inclusion in peace processes in order to ensure progress. They should establish clear mechanisms to monitor the implementation of provisions on education in peace accords, and encourage the identification and use of non-formal settings and informal resources that exist in the local/regional/national context for educational purposes. Moreover, it is argued that the concept of 'quality education for peace' needs to be further elaborated and should include:

- The principles of accessible and inclusive education. Fundamental to this, ensure adequate funding and coordinated structures to address in particular the educational situation of children and youth from displaced communities, children affected by armed groups and forces, refugees, orphans, and other marginalized or vulnerable groups. Ensure that policies are in place that require equity in educational opportunities for girls and young women in primary and secondary school, and insist on equal allocation of resources and steps to overcome cultural, economic, and legal biases that keep girls out of schools and social activities;
- The recognition that while each context is different, there can still be standardized curriculum and textbooks that promote reconciliation, stress tolerance, and accurately present the often competing visions of national history (including the root causes of conflict) and peace and peacebuilding;
- Prioritized teacher (and education administrator) training programs within budget allocations to reinforce national reconciliation and the concept of teachers as "peacebuilders" through their work in and out of school;
- The identification and promotion of children and youth peace initiatives, including mechanisms outside of the context of formal education that encourage inter-community contact, reconciliation, networking, intercultural linking, activities leading to social integration, and peacebuilding;
- Processes which identify, document and share good practices from around the world (including those from children and young people) that address education within conflict and in post-conflict situations (include a full range of initiatives) in order to facilitate additional support from governments, donors and international organizations.

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<sup>54</sup> Save the Children 2008.

#### *4.4 Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE)*

The Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE)<sup>55</sup> is a global, open network of non-governmental organizations, UN agencies, donors, practitioners, researchers and individuals from affected populations working together within a humanitarian and development framework to ensure the right to education in emergencies and post-crisis reconstruction. INEE aims to serve members working together within a humanitarian and development framework to ensure all persons the right to quality education and a safe learning environment in emergencies and post-crisis recovery. INEE has developed a tool to achieve a minimum level of educational access and quality in emergencies and early reconstruction as well as to ensure the accountability of the workers who provide these services.<sup>56</sup> INEE's website offers a rich reservoir of resources related to education and armed conflict, peace education, capacity building, etc. Remarkably, searching the site for keywords such as 'religion', 'FBO', or 'FBEI' does not yet return any results.

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<sup>55</sup> Website INEE: [www.ineesite.org](http://www.ineesite.org).

<sup>56</sup> See [http://www.ineesite.org/minimum\\_standards/MSEE\\_report.pdf](http://www.ineesite.org/minimum_standards/MSEE_report.pdf).

## 5. Expertise within ICCO Alliance

### 5.1 ICCO Alliance's educational programmes in fragile states

The ICCO Alliance Educational Programme focuses on the following countries:

ICCO ALLIANCE EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMME: COUNTRIES		
Region	Focus countries	Supporting countries
<i>Latin America</i>	Peru	Bolivia
<i>Africa &amp; Middle East</i>	Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Kenya, Malawi, Mali, Sudan, Uganda	Angola, Ghana, Liberia, Senegal
<i>Asia, Europe and Pacific</i>	India, Indonesia, Thailand	Albania

Education and (post-)conflict is one out of five specific focal areas of the ICCO Alliance Educational Programme.<sup>57</sup> It applies to the following selection of programme countries:

ICCO ALLIANCE EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMME: EDUCATION AND (POST-)CONFLICT	
Country	ICCO Alliance member
Liberia	Prisma (ZOA)
Sudan (South Sudan and Darfur)	ICCO & Kerk in Actie; Prisma (Red een Kind; ZOA)
Uganda	Edukans; ICCO/Kia; Prisma (ZOA)
India (Assam)	Prisma (Red een Kind, Oikonomos)
Thailand (Myanmar border area)	Prisma (ZOA)

Next to the joint Educational Programme, individual ICCO Alliance members operate in the field of education and conflict transformation in the following states:

NON-ICCO ALLIANCE EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMES IN (POST-)CONFLICT SETTINGS	
Country	ICCO Alliance member
Pakistan	ICCO & Kerk in Actie
Afghanistan	ICCO & Kerk in Actie; Prisma (ZOA)
Sri-Lanka	Prisma (ZOA)
Cambodia	Prisma (ZOA)
Chad	Prisma (Woord en Daad)
DR Congo	ICCO & kerk in Actie
Haiti	Prisma (Woord en Daad)
Colombia	Prisma (ZOA)

<sup>57</sup> The ICCO Alliance Educational Programme entails five focal areas: literacy, education and work, education and HIV/Aids, education in (post-)conflict, and education of marginalised peoples. The Alliance has adopted three main strategies: direct poverty alleviation, civil society building, and lobbying and advocacy. The programme objectives are realised through capacity development, lobbying, provision of financial and technical support, and the creation of linkages between various stakeholders (brokerage). The Alliance links the Educational Programme (which is a sub-programme of the overarching Access to Basic Services Theme) to the other main themes, being Democratisation and Peacebuilding, and Sustainable and Fair Economic Development (see ICCO & Kerk in Actie 2008c).

### 5.2 ICCO Alliance and the roles of FBEIs in fragile states

The ICCO Alliance Educational Programme views education for all primarily as a state duty. Governments should be held responsible for generating conditions that serve quality education. Moreover, they are responsible for assessment and quality control, regulation, and administration of the educational sector. However, in settings where state provision of education is absent or insufficient, civil society organisations (such as ICCO Alliance members and their partner organisations) can play a vital role as:

- *Service providers*: complementary to the state and from a rights-based approach;
- *Innovators*: to develop of new ideas and applications that stimulate the quality of education and can eventually be incorporated in state policy;
- *Informed critics and advocates*: to examine state performance in the educational sector and lobby in favour of free and accessible education for all.<sup>58</sup>

Thus, in the context of fragile states, civil society organisation such as RNGOs, FBOs and FBEIs play a vital role in the educational sector. The current report intends to outline the roles and responsibilities of FBEIs in processes of conflict transformation in fragile states, as well as to examine how FBEIs operate vis-à-vis state educational institutions and secular NGOs.

Chapter 3 demonstrated that FBEIs often show a long historical involvement in the educational sector in conflict-affected countries, and that education is strongly linked to issues of power and politics. Furthermore, it showed how religious education is deemed of great importance outside the West, and how this may either favour development goals or spark divisions and conflict. The following section seeks to examine how this applies to the members and partner organisations of the ICCO Alliance. Some highlights include:

- ZOA Refugee Care offers extensive expertise in development in fragile states;
- ICCO & Kerk in Actie (ICCO/Kia) operates in the educational sector worldwide and has developed specialist guidelines for context analysis and conflict transformation. Moreover, ICCO/Kia has experience in promoting interfaith initiatives;
- Red een Kind has a leading focus on the field of basic education;
- Woord en Daad, although not a member of the Educational Programme, has extensive experience in the educational field and operates in several conflict-affected settings.

### 5.3 ZOA Refugee Care

ZOA Refugee Care<sup>59</sup> is an international NGO that aims to facilitate effective and lasting improvements in the living conditions of people who are affected by violent conflict. Its main area of expertise is the provision of support to refugees, internally displaced people (IDPs), and returnees who fled their homes as a result of large-scale armed conflicts. ZOA is active in 11 countries in Africa and Southeast Asia, and employs 900 to 1000 staff, of whom around 95 percent is locally or regionally recruited.

Among the ICCO Alliance members, ZOA is the sole organisation that has local presence in the countries in which it works. This allows ZOA to directly address the basic needs of local communities, and to enhance the capacities of those communities and their civil society organisations. ZOA regards such direct involvement as imperative in countries where governments and civil society actors fail to adequately support their constituencies.

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<sup>58</sup> ICCO Alliance 2006. For a more elaborate definition of the roles of different actors in education, see chapter 9 of the ICCO Alliance 'Handreiking Onderwijs' (ICCO Alliance 2008).

<sup>59</sup> Website ZOA: [www.zoa.nl](http://www.zoa.nl).

Most of ZOA's interventions last between five and fifteen years and predominantly focus on the phase of rehabilitation. Prior to the set-up of a programme, local needs are assessed through a context analyses that lists stakeholders, needs, and potential partner organisations. Subsequently, a Country Annual Policy Plan is drafted, which delineates targets and modes of operation in a specific setting. In the course of, and when possible from the start of a programme, ZOA supports and collaborates with local partners. The objective of these partnerships is to maximise the reach, impact, and sustainability of interventions. Eventually, partner organisations will be capable of continuing and building on prior achievements, either independently or with tailored support by ZOA, which allows ZOA to gradually phase out.

### *ZOA and education*

ZOA has extensive experience in the field of education in conflict-affected settings. Whereas Edukans operates with a strong thematic focus on education, ZOA acts according to the overall needs of a particular target group. Education is a major component<sup>60</sup> in its interventions, besides food security, water and sanitation, and a variety of other cross-cutting themes. Currently, education receives particular attention in ZOA's programmes in Sudan, Liberia, Uganda, Cambodia, Thailand, and Sri-Lanka.

ZOA's Education Policy Paper<sup>61</sup> stresses the importance of education as a human right and both defines the constructive effects of education in emergencies, such as physical, psychosocial, and cognitive protection, as well as the potential negative impact of schooling, namely, how education may be used as a tool to repress minorities or enhance segregation. ZOA believes that education is both life sustaining, as it offers safe spaces for learning and monitoring children's wellbeing, and life saving, as it instructs about dangers such as land mines and protects against the harms of abduction, recruitment as fighters, and sexual harassment. Finally, education promotes peace and stability by mitigating the psychosocial impact of armed conflict and by offering a sense of normalcy, stability, structure, and hope.

ZOA's interventions in the educational sector seek to realise the following objectives:

- Children, youth and adults who never received basic education have equal access to enter and continue to study at basic education level
- Teachers and school officials are in place and are trained in delivering and managing basic education
- The community is effectively involved in basic education
- The local government takes responsibility for basic education in the community and is supported to be able to take over full responsibility
- Local government, school staff and the community are cooperating effectively in achieving basic education
- Peace building, psychosocial care and security are part of basic education
- Physical resources are in place to ensure basic education

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<sup>60</sup> In 2008, the planned expenditure on education was 23 percent on average per ZOA country, which is the largest percentage compared to other sectors in which ZOA is involved (ZOA 2009).

<sup>61</sup> ZOA 2009.



ZOA primarily focuses on the reconstruction of formal and non-formal basic education in conflict and post-conflict settings. It seeks to provide education to all school-age children within a community. Thereby, it covers primary and lower secondary education until the age of fifteen. ZOA's educational programme envisions:

- Sufficient and sustainable resources for education within a community are in place;
- A community actively participates in education activities;
- The local government is supported to take responsibility over (or for) the education sector.

ZOA's strategy to achieve this is:

- ZOA will only involve itself in the education sector within the geographical area it is working;
- When available, ZOA will work through existing education systems, instead of setting up separate structures;
- ZOA will actively search for and work with other stakeholders (to be) involved.

One aspect of ZOA's educational programme is the establishment of parent-teacher associations. These initiatives strengthen the relationships between schools and communities, as a result of which schools are well embedded in, and supported by, local communities.

#### *ZOA and religion*

Although ZOA is inspired by the Christian notion of compassion<sup>62</sup>, its Education Policy Paper makes no reference to religion, nor does the context analysis that ZOA carries out at the start of its programmes. Yet, ZOA is motivated by biblical ideas and the gospel of Jesus Christ, which 'calls us to pursue and promote justice and to support people in situations of suffering and injustice'.<sup>63</sup> ZOA believes that Christian organisations have a specific responsibility to 'contribute to signs of hope for the benefit of *all* people'. Hence, no distinction is made on the basis of race, religion, gender, or political orientation.

Through its recruitment policy, ZOA's Christian identity becomes reflected in its field missions. Most, or preferably all, (semi-)management staff has a Christian background. Locally recruited staff, however, does not (need to) have a Christian background. ZOA prefers to collaborate with organisations that share its vision and mission. However, partnerships with FBOs that have a different religious background, such as the Khmer Buddhist Association in Cambodia or Islamic FBOs in Afghanistan, are pursued when this serves the quality of a programme. Management and staff at country offices may engage in conversations on religious issues, but this depends on the local management and is not required. As such, a clear separation is guaranteed between ZOA's motivations on the one hand, and its professional organisation on the other.

ZOA, thus, collaborates with partner organisations that live up to certain professional standards and are firmly rooted in local communities. It is ZOA's preference to work together with church organisations or other Christian agencies on the basis of a shared vision on humanitarian assistance and long-term development. Being a signatory to the Code of Conduct of the Red Cross, ZOA is careful not to exclude parts of societies based on their

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<sup>62</sup> See [www.zoa.nl](http://www.zoa.nl).

<sup>63</sup> ZOA 2007.

faith, religion, etc. As in all partnerships, ZOA seeks to overcome minor differences in vision with partner organisation through dialogue.

It is ZOA's preference to work together with church organisations or other Christian organisations on the basis of a shared vision on humanitarian assistance and long-term development. Being a signatory to the Code of Conduct of the Red Cross, ZOA is careful not to exclude parts of societies based on their faith, religion, etc.

Based on past experiences, direct cooperation with churches is rather rare, since the latter's mission is not necessarily congruent with ZOA's vision on development. Branches of churches that especially confront development issues are eligible for partnerships. At the same time, ZOA is careful not to cater just one (Christian) part of a population. A negative aspect of collaborating with religious authorities and FBOs may be their conservative stance towards issues such as HIV/Aids. In Uganda, for example, ZOA found churches discouraging or trivialising the use of condoms, which is contrary to common advice by health professionals. On the other hand, engaging in dialogue with conservative religious representatives can be seen as an opportunity to address certain standpoints.

#### *ZOA and conflict transformation*

Peacebuilding is a cross-cutting theme in ZOA's programmes and is defined as supporting 'the development of a culture and practice of inclusion and sustainable peace among adversaries'.<sup>64</sup> This is reflected in the promotion of interreligious and interethnic cooperation, equal access to services, and accountable governance, amongst others. ZOA has developed and implemented tools for conflict analysis and monitoring, which have deepened understanding of the different roles played by elders, men, women, and youth in conflict and peacebuilding.

ZOA focuses on the provision of psychosocial support and trauma therapy, but to a limited extent, since it has little expertise in the specific medical and psychosocial counselling that would be required. ZOA does not engage in curriculum development. Only in situations where no curriculum or school books are at hand, ZOA supports the development of educational structures itself. Available curricula may be complemented with informal courses on subjects such as life skills, HIV/Aids, and peacebuilding.

#### *5.4 ICCO & Kerk in Actie*

ICCO and Kerk in Actie<sup>65</sup> (ICCO/Kia) are major players in the Dutch development sector and jointly participate in the ICCO Alliance Educational Programme. As such, ICCO/Kia offers broad expertise in the fields of conflict transformation and education. These subjects are accommodated in two of ICCO's overarching thematic areas: Democracy and Peacebuilding, and Access to Basic Services. ICCO/Kia gives financial support and advice to local organisations and networks across the globe that are committed to providing access to basic social services, bringing about fair economic development and promoting peace and democracy. Additionally, ICCO/Kia partake in the Schokland Agreement,<sup>66</sup> an association of

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<sup>64</sup> ZOA 2007.

<sup>65</sup> Website ICCO: [www.icco.nl](http://www.icco.nl). Website Kerk in Actie: [www.kerkinactie.nl](http://www.kerkinactie.nl).

<sup>66</sup> This joint target has been laid down in 'Het Akkoord van Schokland' in 2007. Participating organisations in this so-called Schokland Project are ICCO/Kia, Save the Children, Oxfam Novib, War Child Nederland, Woord en Daad, Dark & Light Blind Care, and the Dutch Minister of Development Cooperation. URL: [http://www.hetakkoordvan\\_schokland.nl/documenten/5%20onderwijs-conflict%20def.pdf](http://www.hetakkoordvan_schokland.nl/documenten/5%20onderwijs-conflict%20def.pdf). See also <http://edufragile.pbworks.com>.

several Dutch development agencies that agreed to advance access to and quality of education in three (post-)conflict countries: Afghanistan, Sudan, and Colombia.

#### *ICCO/Kia and education*

Currently, ICCO/Kia supports partners that operate in the educational sector in eleven of the countries of the ICCO Alliance Educational Programme, as well as in states that are not part of the Alliance (see 4.1).

- In Congo, ICCO/Kia established a regional office in Bukavu that facilitates the rehabilitation and equipment of schools in cooperation with UN-OCHA.
- In Colombia, ICCO/Kia collaborates with a partner organisation (FTP) to provide (informal) education to (IDP) children in the suburbs of Bogota, aimed at offering an alternative to recruitment into armed forces. FTP is a FBO that has no relationships with churches or Christian organisations.
- In Afghanistan, ICCO/Kia's parent organisation HAWCA (Humanitarian Assistance for Women and Children in Afghanistan) seeks to involve women in issues of reconstruction and development. During the Taliban regime, covert education was provided to girls. Today, schooling is organised in the Parwan province aimed at positively influencing attitudes on peace and human rights. Teachers are being trained and creative courses are offered to enhance children's self-esteem. In addition, HAWCA employs a literacy project for women from the age of fifteen.

In the Ghazni province, ICCO/Kia collaborates with SDO (Sanayee Development Organisation) on generating peace councils that serve as local conflict resolution mechanisms.

CCA (Cooperation Centre for Afghanistan) offers assistance and counselling to children who have been affected by violence. In so doing, CCA involves parents, politicians, civil society organisations, teachers, and police to reduce violence towards children. In Kabul, CCA runs a centre for traumatised and vulnerable children, as well as a teacher training programme and a political lobby.

- In Uganda, important partners are Basic Education Support Plan (BESP) and the Ugandan Joint Christian Council (UJCC). These organisations, which also receive support by Edukans, serve as examples of successful interfaith cooperation on the national level, as will be shown below. In Karamoja, a region in north-eastern Uganda, ICCO/Kia supported a mobile school that would accompany nomadic people and their cattle. In this region, education has traditionally been met with resistance, as local people perceived schooling as a means adopted by Europeans to subject and prevent them from living a nomadic life. Today this changes, as people see successful, educated role models who return to their village and contribute to its development.
- Co-financed with Oxfam Novib and the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, an education support programme has been established in Southern Sudan that contributes to an 'inclusive, relevant, learner-friendly and empowering basic education system' that serves in support of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement. This programme includes renovation of schools, skill development, support of return and resettlement of teachers, raising awareness of the validity of a demand for quality and accountability from both the government and civil society, a political lobby in favour of quality education, as well as a pilot study into the role of schools as promoters peace, which is conducted by RECONCILE. This local partner organisation seeks to enhance community cohesion and coexistence through promoting 'healthy ways to deal with trauma and grief'.

ICCO has developed a clear view on the division of tasks in the educational sector. Ideally, the state allocates money to ensure the provision of education. Besides, it is responsible for the equal and fair distribution of these funds, in order to avoid quality education to be exclusively available to e.g. elite, male, or urban populations. Furthermore, the state is responsible for quality control, legislation, setting of norms, and the control and creation of conditions necessary for good management of the educational system. School governance and organisation on the local level, however, can be the responsibility of associations that may be related to churches. These associations have to adhere to quality standards set by the government. Sometimes, these local educational organisations pay teacher salaries, in other instances, teacher payment is considered a government responsibility. The ICCO Alliance's task is not to support the government, but rather to assist civil society, which consists, for example, of educational associations and executive school administrations, but also interest groups that seek to enhance the quality of schooling or promote inclusive education. Western development and donor agencies, such as ICO/Kia, support local NGOs by means of financial aid, capacity development (for example by training, consultancies, staff, exchanges, and other ways to professionalise their organisation), by brokering between essential stakeholders, and support lobby components in education programmes or lobby in the Netherlands.

#### *ICCO/Kia and religion*

'One of the strengths of ICCO/Kia is the ability to work ecumenically and even more so interfaith. This unique mandate should be recognised more explicitly'. ICCO/Kia notes that religion can have positive and negative influences on processes of conflict transformation. It seeks to mobilise religious capital in favour of peace while minimising religious influence on attitudes and perceptions that fuel conflict. 'Spoilers of peace can be those actors or doctrines who preach intolerance and reward violence with spiritual approval. But it can also be that religious organisations hinder social change due to their conservative approaches, rules and unchangeable hierarchies. Another risk can be the exclusion of non-believers'. Still, churches, mosques, or FBOs may be deeply embedded in local contexts and thus highly effective in promoting peace, e.g. by offering basic services and by calling on spiritually-informed concepts of forgiveness and healing.<sup>67</sup>

The ICCO/Kia policy paper Democracy and Peacebuilding also draws attention to the roles of FBOs and religious leaders in conflict transformation.<sup>68</sup> Based on research by the Knowledge Centre Religion and Development,<sup>69</sup> it concludes that FBOs and religious leaders can provide social, moral, and spiritual assets in support of conflict transformation.

- Social assets of FBOs are:
  - Long history of involvement;
  - Extensive networks and ability to mobilise people;
  - Includes religious moderates as well as conservatives;
  - Includes single-faith as well as multi-faith actors;
  - Involvement in advocacy.
- Moral and spiritual assets of FBOs are:
  - Faith may connect people to strive for peace and human rights;
  - Moral and spiritual authority;

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<sup>67</sup> ICCO & Kerk in Actie 2008b.

<sup>68</sup> ICCO & Kerk in Actie 2009.

<sup>69</sup> Knowledge Centre Religion and Development 2008d.

- Potential initiator of change;
- Mobilisations through moral ideas.

ICCO's partners have been selected on the basis of their expertise and embedding in local communities. Often, FBOs fulfil these requirements. One of ICCO's Ugandan partner organisations, UJCC, represents the three main churches: Catholic, Anglican, and Orthodox. On the highest level, they have managed to unite these denominations, which proves very effective in terms of lobbying and advocacy, also in the field of education. On the local level, however, this cooperation may be less effective. In addition, UJCC cooperates closely with secular organisations and its expertise is widely acknowledged. It has monitored the Ugandan elections and various democratic institutions, and has lobbied jointly with other organisations. Still, they distinguish themselves as religious actors and operate on behalf of the bishops.

BESP, too, is an inter-faith initiative of Catholics and Anglicans, while Karamoja has seen cooperation among Muslim and Pentecostal communities. Such faith-based and inter-faith initiatives are highly valuable, as they effectively show that people can get along peacefully and constructively, despite their religious differences. ICCO/Kia noted how in Indonesia, moderate and 'progressive' Muslim organisations preferred collaboration with Christian organisations over secular ones, since to many non-Westerners, secularism is something that can hardly be understood. Sharing the background of Bible and Quran can facilitate easy mutual understanding. In Southern Sudan, various FBOs have joined in lobby and advocacy initiatives that seek to guarantee government funding for FBEIs. Here, cooperation among Christian and Muslim FBOs has not yet been signalled, as a result of the sensitive role of religion in the recent conflict.

During the war in South Sudan that ended in 2005, nuns and priests were among the few service providers that remained present. Catholic, Presbyterian, Jesuit, and Comboni Fathers were all involved in education, both in South Sudan as well as in refugee camps elsewhere. Today, the South Sudanese government has gained autonomy over the educational sector and seeks to appropriate educational responsibilities, often without acknowledging the important role of FBEIs during the war. These FBEIs, consequently, frequently resist transferring their duties, informed by the knowledge that donors, such as ICCO/Kia, will in due course curb their financial support. By referring to their historical role in the educational sector, but also by drawing on religious sentiments, FBEIs attempt to ascertain continued funding. They depict Christian organisations as 'one family' to attain continued support. According to ICCO/Kia, members of the ICCO Alliance are not very receptive to such arguments, since they themselves are liable to secular donors such as the Dutch government, rather than to churches.

ICCO itself does not distinguish itself in the South as a Protestant organisation. Some people may be not even aware of ICCO's Christian identity, but all the more of its support for inter-religious cooperation. Hence, ICCO's approach to religion is quite 'instrumentalist': how can religion contribute to quality education or conflict transformation? But according to ICCO/Kia, they also profit from sharing a common Christian 'language' with their partners, since it may facilitate discussion on sensitive topics by departing from a common ground. Human rights are issues that are often perceived as Western-centric, but by showing that these rights originate from the Bible, support may be gained. In the context of fragile states

or violent conflict, religion offers the resources and willpower to continue operating under difficult circumstances.

### *ICCO/Kia and conflict transformation*

In the field of conflict transformation, RECONCILE supports schools in South Sudan to serve as promoters of peace. This association seeks to promote peaceful behaviour among teachers and pupils and to enhance non-violent conflict resolution skills, for example by selecting some pupils as negotiators. To many boys and men in South Sudan, war means business and survival. RECONCILE seeks to counter this tendency.

Conflict Transformation (CT) 'aims to transform negative destructive conflict into positive constructive relations and deals with behavioural and attitudinal aspects but also the structural dimensions of conflict'.<sup>70</sup> Particularly the specific scope on the structural dimension of conflict distinguishes this approach from widely criticised 'superficial' analyses by those who seek immediate results. 'While governments are best placed for preparing and concluding official peace agreements, faith-based actors can play a very useful role in the parallel process of reconciliation and long-term stabilisation', as ICCO&Kia noted in the opening speech at the November 2008 conference on religion, development, and fragile states.

ICCO has developed a practical tool for conflict analysis in countries where conflict transformation constitutes a focal point of concern.<sup>71</sup> By means of the tool, an analysis can be made of the (relationships between) structural and immediate causes of conflict. The analysis constitutes the point of departure for CT programmes. CT goes beyond mere conflict resolution and conflict management, since it not only entails a focus on changing attitudes and improving relationships, but also on changing the underlying structural contexts of conflict. Often, it is argued in the tool, 'people jump too quickly from a brief analysis or context description to the identification of potential transformers'. The conflict analysis as propagated in the tool seeks to avoid this pitfall by thoroughly examining the root-causes of injustice and inequality and taking into account the variety of actors involved in a conflict. This is done during a participatory process in which local partners define the main problems and development priorities. Since education is part of ICCO's Access to Basic Services Programme, its role in Peacebuilding is not made explicit in CT policy documents. However, schooling is (especially within ICCO/Kia's education programme) perceived as potentially vital in addressing the following three dimensions of CT:<sup>72</sup>

- Behaviour-related interventions: addressing sexual and gender-based violence, addressing violent masculinities, interventions directed at youth, and conflict management and protection work;
- Attitude-related interventions: peace education and training, information sharing and peace education through media, mutual understanding work, inter-religious work, psycho-social support and trauma healing, reconciliation work, supporting the contribution of women to conflict transformation, and supporting the contribution of FBOs to conflict transformation;
- Context-related interventions: support of marginalised groups, cultural traditions work, justice and rights work, democratisation, and social inclusion work.

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<sup>70</sup> ICCO & Kerk in Actie 2008b, p. 5.

<sup>71</sup> ICCO & Kerk in Actie 2008b.

<sup>72</sup> ICCO & Kerk in Actie 2009.

### *5.5 Red een Kind*

Red een Kind<sup>73</sup> (Help a Child) is a Christian NGO based in Zwolle. Until five years ago, Red een Kind focused on providing aid to individual children, mainly in India. Over the past years, a transformation has been accomplished towards a community-based perception of development which addresses structural, rather than individual problems in the South. Today, Red een Kind is still in the process of establishing new partnerships and defining its policy guidelines, which include a strong focus on education.

#### *Red een Kind and education*

Red een Kind acts as donor in the following partnerships:

- Two partners in Ethiopia;
- Two partners in South Sudan;
- One partner (ZOA) in Darfur;
- Two partners in India (Assam);
- One partner in Malawi;
- One partner in Zambia.

Not only in Sudan, but also in Northeast India, these educational programmes relate to processes of conflict transformation. Red een Kind offers funding, training, capacity building and specialist support in the field of education, such as teacher training. Particular attention is paid to the acquisition of life skills, which includes information on HIV/Aids, conflict resolution, and negotiating. Every year, a conference is organised to discuss a particular theme in the educational field, e.g. about working with community-based organisations such as parent-teacher associations, or about lobby and advocacy. One of the topics that Red een kind wants to emphasise in 2009 is inclusive education. Together with other members of the ICCO Alliance, workshops will be organised to discuss how children with disabilities can be identified in a community and participate in education. Programmes are tailored to meet the needs of specific communities. In addition, Red een Kind's partners facilitate parent-teacher associations that allow members from various social groups can meet and cooperate.

Whenever possible, Red een Kind collaborates with governments in order to be able to transfer responsibilities in the long run. The Ethiopian government has strongly committed itself to achieving the Education for All targets and has attempted to send every child to school from the age of seven. Red een Kind supports an NGO that assists the government to live up to its promises and take over responsibilities in 2010. In Assam, the government is less committed, as a result of which the educational programme will last longer. Red een Kind also stimulates partners to collaborate with other NGOs on the local and regional level by exchanging expertise and information. Lobby and advocacy work needs to be extended to the national level.

#### *Red een Kind and religion*

Red een Kind offers help to children regardless of their background, religion, ethnicity, caste, or sex. It operates from the biblical vision that the mark of the Christian is love for one's neighbour. Its partner organisations all have a Christian background, even in regions like Darfur where Christians represent a minority. Since the needs in these areas are substantial, the implementation of educational programmes through Christian organisations is

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<sup>73</sup> Website Red een Kind: [www.redeenkind.nl](http://www.redeenkind.nl).

legitimised. In Darfur, ZOA acts as local partner. Cooperating with Christian partners is a policy choice that involves the advantage of sharing principles and beliefs, which provides a common ground for the implementation of programmes. Moreover, churches are deeply embedded in local communities and can easily reach people on the grass root level.

Disadvantages of cooperating with churches are also pointed out. FBOs may have different interests – either political or missionary – that do not relate to Red een Kind's prime policy goals, such as the provision of education in a particular area. Since Red een Kind envisions itself purely as a development organisation, mission is not part of its programmes. Moreover, churches may also be involved in conflicts, as every community is represented by its own religious denomination.

#### *Red een Kind and conflict transformation*

Schooling in (post-)conflict settings is a marginal area of operation and has not yet been covered by extensive policy formation. Red een Kind tends to focus on development, rather than relief. To combine a vision and approach of sustainable development with a relief phase, such as in Darfur, is a challenge. Although talking about peacebuilding is prohibited in Darfur, promising steps can be set by involving children and teachers of different background in one school community, where they learn to live together. Parents' involvement in parent-teacher committees is another valuable tool to support peacebuilding processes.

In South Sudan, only twenty percent of school-age children attends schooling, and only two percent completes a full course of primary education. Red een Kind relies on the expertise of partner organisations to organise education and establish contacts with authorities, and acts merely as donor. Rwanda en Burundi are two states that are characterised by conflict and fragility. Here Red een Kind operates, though not in the field of education.

#### *5.6 Woord en Daad*

Although Woord en Daad<sup>74</sup> is not a member of the ICCO Alliance Educational Programme, its expertise in the field of education and in fragile contexts such as Haiti and Chad, as well as its affiliation with Prisma, makes it an organisation that cannot be left out of this study. Woord en Daad solely collaborates on long-term basis with Christian partners that share their vision and mission. This contributes to a partnership on equal grounds, in which dialogue and mutual exchange are deemed significant. In a partnership, Woord en Daad not only offers financial capital, but also expertise and know-how.<sup>75</sup> Woord en Daad does not collaborate directly with churches, since experience has taught that this often inhibits an efficient implementation of programmes.

#### *Woord en Daad and education*

Amidst a global focus on achieving universal education and sending as many children to school as possible, Woord en Daad already looks beyond the MDG year 2015 by challenging policy makers to develop an agenda for a subsequent phase of development policy, which depicts education not as a ultimate goal but as a means to empower youth by providing relevant and sustainable forms of education:<sup>76</sup>

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<sup>74</sup> Website Woord en Daad: [www.woordendaad.nl](http://www.woordendaad.nl).

<sup>75</sup> Woord en Daad (2006a).

<sup>76</sup> Woord en Daad (2007a).



- Basic education often lacks a preparatory focus on the varying ‘careers’ that children may pursue after leaving school;
- Increased attention to primary schooling has only scarcely been accompanied with a focus on improved teacher education facilities;
- No consideration is given within educational programmes to the ‘world of work’, while most children will end up working immediately after finishing school.

Recently, Woord en Daad has established partnerships with FBOs in Chad, Sierra Leone, and Liberia, countries that receive scarce international attention and are relatively stable, which is a precondition for working on education. Depending on the context and local needs, its efforts focus on access to schooling or on quality improvement and curriculum development. In Chad, Woord en Daad engages in a partnership with a development branch of an association of churches. Accordingly, a large constituency of sixty schools is reached. This partnership entails clear mechanisms of accountability and successfully encourages popular participation. Schools are built, and churches remain responsible for maintenance, which is a major advantage of cooperating with local FBOs.

In Haiti, a country with a violent past and continuing tensions, the government is hardly functioning and unable to provide education. Ninety percent of the educational sector is privately organised by protestant, catholic, and some other actors. Woord en Daad supports individual primary schools through adoption programmes by which Dutch private persons sponsor a particular child. In addition, Woord en Daad maintains partnerships with institutes that work on curriculum development, teacher training, and lobbying with the government. Moreover, cooperation has been established with an organisation that develops a Christian curriculum that regards education as the basis for the spread of non-violent and non-corrupt attitudes.

Both in Haiti, Sierra Leone and in Chad, government structures are fragile. Still, Woord en Daad ensures that partner organisations relate to and lobby with state institutions in order not to foster a sense of government redundancy. Whenever possible, collaboration with state authorities is sought, and in principle, the national curriculum constitutes the basis for education, complemented with other programmes if necessary. In Colombia, for example, schools that host IDPs are supported in the provision of psychosocial care by a local organisation.

#### *Woord en Daad and religion*

Woord en Daad stresses that every development organisation operates on the basis of particular convictions and ideals – ‘secular NGOs’ just as much as FBOs. ‘Neutral’ development cooperation, which is not based on certain values, is nonexistent. Therefore, Christian NGOs should not be seen as eccentric but rather as explicitly defining and communicating its beliefs, norms, and values, whereas other or secular organisations do so rather implicitly. Word en Daad itself has a clear Christian signature. In many countries, it is widely accepted to have a religious background, irrespective of its specific denomination. Therefore, operating in as a Christian organisation in a country where Christians are a minority, is not necessarily as problematic as it may seem. In such context, Woord en Daad always seeks to discuss the political implications and position of a particular partner organisation.

In its analysis of the relationship between religion and development, Woord en Daad offers a balanced view on the positive and negative aspects of religion. Negative implications

can mainly be seen when religion becomes related to (violent) struggles for power. 'When religion and power are connected, systems and structures develop that are not longer spiritually informed. Accordingly, religion can be used to manipulate and legitimate'. Religious authority, however, can also be a major force in peacebuilding, and religion can on a micro level contribute to a spirit of survival and resilience.<sup>77</sup>

Partner organisations are selected on professional criteria, but are also expected to found their organisation on orthodox Christian, biblical principles. Target groups, however, should be as broad as possible, irrespective of their ethnic, religious, or social background. Still, Asian organisations differ substantially from Latin-American partners, but sharing a biblical basis offers a fruitful basis for cooperation. Translated to the educational programme, this means treating pupils as children of God, with their own unique talents and responsibilities. Accordingly, discussions on whether these are Western ideas, are avoided because of a common ground.

#### *Woord en Daad and conflict transformation*

The Woord en Daad policy note on fragile states underlines that the concept of 'fragile states' is deceptive. Instead, it proposes to refer to 'situations of fragility that a country is exposed to'. Its chronological approach to situations of fragility is, (1) to create security and stability, (2) to develop a vital civil society, (3) to arrive at a certain level of economic development, and (4) to achieve a certain level of literacy and education. Woord en Daad states that promoting democracy is only possible after promoting development and stability, not the other way around. Moreover, it stresses the importance of acknowledging the vital roles that churches and FBOs usually play at times of conflict and high fragility.<sup>78</sup>

In Colombia, Woord en Daad has integrated peacebuilding aspects in projects at schools. However, peacebuilding is not a major focus in the overall educational programme. In Chad, although the general setting is fragile, the regions where Woord en Daad operates are rural and stable. Peacebuilding, thus, is not very relevant in these contexts. In violent suburbs in Haiti, schooling in itself is already a structuring factor that withholds children from participating in gangs. There are initial contacts about the continuation of a programme in Liberia that is currently run by ZOA.

#### *5.7 Edukans and ICCO Alliance<sup>79</sup>*

Within the ICCO Alliance, Edukans has specific expertise in the field of basic education and plays a coordinating role in the ICCO Alliance Educational Programme. Edukans is a development organisation inspired by biblical values and Christian-social traditions, but is open to anybody taking a stand against oppression and injustice. Faith, hope and commitment act as Edukans' guiding principles.

Edukans supports underprivileged children in developing countries in getting quality education without discrimination on the basis of ethnicity, caste, creed or political conviction. Edukans supports complementary and innovative programmes to improve access, relevance and quality of education, with special attention for the focal areas of Education and Work, Education and HIV/AIDS, Education and (Post-)Conflict and Education and Marginalized Peoples. Edukans supports educational programmes in six of the 17

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<sup>77</sup> Woord en Daad (2006b).

<sup>78</sup> Woord en Daad (2007b).

<sup>79</sup> Website Edukans: [www.edukans.nl](http://www.edukans.nl)

seventeen countries in which the ICCO Alliance Educational Programme is operating, namely Ethiopia, Kenya, Uganda, Malawi, India and Peru.

In the area of education and (post-)conflict Edukans is involved in programme development within the Uganda Educational Programme. In Uganda Edukans shares partnership with the Uganda Joint Council of Churches (UJCC) and BESP (Basic Education Support Programme) in the Teso region (Soroti). In Lango sub region Edukans is supporting local partner organisations LDCAA (Lira District Change Agent Association) and POBEDAM (Partnership on Basic Education Development and Management) in a programme to strengthen school management, leadership and transparency. The Northern Region of Uganda, including Lango sub region, has suffered insurgency for nearly 20 years as a result of government forces fighting the Lord Resistance Army (LRA) rebels. Education, just like other social sectors, suffered significantly as a result of the war.

In developing programmes in the area of education and (post-)conflict, as part of programmes to improve the quality of education, Edukans offers its expertise in basic education to partner organisations specialized in emergency aid and rehabilitation.

### *5.8 Conclusion*

The conclusions that are drawn on the basis of interviews with ICCO Alliance representatives and a review of policy and evaluation documents are presented in the next chapter. Various dilemmas that were brought up during the interviews have been listed under section 6.3.

## 6. Conclusions, discussion, recommendations, and openings for further research

According to Tyndale, ‘for people from faith communities it cannot be only a question of the number of children attending school. Of paramount importance to them is the content of the curriculum and above all the value system, implicit or explicit, underlying the education given. Very many of them abhor the idea of turning schools into individualistic, competitive, largely technical training grounds with jobs alone in mind’.<sup>80</sup> Studies that combine an interest in the roles of Faith-Based Educational Institutions with a focus on conflict transformation in fragile states seem rare. Policy documents that deal with education in conflict-affected settings seldom incorporate an elaborate view on the role of religion, religious organisations, and religious authorities, although it is increasingly acknowledged that religion plays a vital role in processes of development and in the lives of most people in the South.

This study has outlined the roles and responsibilities of faith-based educational institutions with a particular focus on their involvement in processes of conflict transformation in fragile states. Based on an overview of academic literature and an examination of expertise and policy among international development organisations, most notably the ICCO Alliance, this conclusion provides answers to the main research questions:

*What roles do FBEIs play vis-à-vis state educational institutions and secular educational NGOs, and what responsibilities do they have in the different phases of conflict transformation? How does their access to resources (human, financial, material) change with the different phases of conflict transformation? What kind of international support do local FBEIs need in the different phases of conflict transformation?*

After addressing this set of questions, this chapter outlines some limitations to the approach of this study. Finally, it lists points for discussion and openings for further research.

### 6.1 Answering the main research questions

The ICCO Alliance Educational Programme operates in a variety of countries across Africa, Asia, and Latin America. A number of these countries has been listed as ‘fragile states’ by the Dutch government, including Afghanistan, Pakistan, DR Congo, Sudan, and Colombia. Other programme countries that face severe security challenges include Ethiopia, Liberia, Uganda, India (Assam), Thailand, Chad, and Haiti. In these countries, state authorities tend to be unable or unwilling to adequately provide basic services such as education. Hence, civil society organisations fill this gap by building schools, repairing infrastructure, providing school materials, training teachers, encouraging children to attend schooling, setting up parent-teacher associations, and by lobbying for quality education, amongst others.

The section of this report that delved into current policy, expertise among the members of the ICCO Alliance highlighted that supporting education in fragile states is of crucial importance in view of achieving quality education for all boys and girl by the year 2015. Schooling serves as a decisive ingredient to building sustainable peace and, importantly, is a fundamental human right. Hence, Save the Children actively encourages governments, development agencies, and parties engaged in peace processes to invest in education in conflict-affected countries.

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<sup>80</sup> Tyndale 2004, as quoted in Haynes 2007, p. 176.

A central aspect that comes forward from interviews and desk research is the complicated change in the distribution of responsibilities that marks transitional stages in processes of conflict transformation. In conflict-affected areas and emergency situations, the provision of education is mostly – if at all – executed by non-state actors, among which FBEIs. Certain educational responsibilities will, in the course of stabilisation and rehabilitation, be transferred to state institutions, which may imply a loss of significance and influence to FBEIs. FBOs may call on religiously informed motives to secure enduring support from international donors with a religious background.

In conflict-affected settings, schooling offers much-needed physical, psychosocial, and cognitive protection to communities. Both ZOA and ICCO & Kia have extensive experience in this phase. ZOA has indicated that the absence or weakness of civil society structures in fragile states has informed its self-implementing strategy of operation, which is vital when people's needs are urgent. Other ICCO Alliance members mainly provide funding and training to partners in conflict-affected settings. In one instance, ZOA even serves as local partner of other ICCO Alliance members.

#### *The roles of FBEIs in conflict settings*

The ICCO Alliance acknowledges the potential problematic side of education in conflict settings, as it may serve to repress minorities or enhance segregation. By means of context analyses, it seeks to identify the needs of local communities and the power context in which FBEIs operate, in order to stimulate constructive development projects. However, executing such context or conflict analysis in hectic and perilous circumstances poses difficulties, especially when authorities are not keen on civil society involvement. FBOs, here, can rely on an existing religious infrastructure of churches, mosques, or temples that allows them to get foot on the ground in conflict zones, which may be a major advantage over secular initiatives. In conflict-affected areas, however, setting up educational structures remains a challenge, in which FBEIs have identified a variety of responsibilities:

- To provide basic education to children, youth, and adults who never received basic education;
- To promote the acquisition of life skills such as landmine awareness, conflict resolution, and combat the risk of children being abducted into armed forces or affected by sexual harassment, HIV/Aids, and other harms;
- To provide non-formal (peace) education in settings where formal education is impossible, for example in refugee camps;
- To train teachers and school officials;
- To involve communities in basic education, for example by establishing parent-teacher associations;
- To encourage (local) governments to assume responsibility for education;
- To stimulate effective cooperation between authorities, communities, and schools;
- To promote peace education;
- To provide psychosocial care and trauma healing;
- To provide physical resources to ensure the continuity of education;
- To address sexual and gender-based violence;
- To lobby for inclusion of education in peace agreements.
- To consult with warring parties and military forces to ensure the neutrality of education and the immunity of schools;

- To ensure that the educational sector and schools become involved in political or ideological struggles.

Whereas secular NGOs share these responsibilities, FBEIs set themselves apart by:

- Drawing on an extensive network to assess local needs and facilitate a thorough context analysis;
- Calling on religious authorities to speak out against violence and in favour of peace and tolerance;
- Mobilising communities through moral ideas;
- Offering moral and spiritual relief in the face of violence and bereavement;
- Activating a well-embedded and extensive network of religious organisations and authorities to advance, distribute and monitor the distribution of aid;

#### *The roles of FBEIs in post-conflict settings*

ZOA intends to gradually phase out after the phase of conflict and emergency, while other Prisma and ICCO Alliance members, such as ICCO/Kia, Red een Kind, and Woord en Daad, actually engage in development challenges in post-conflict settings. Following the phase of emergency relief, the ICCO Alliance generally seeks and trains local partner organisations and authorities to gradually transfer its responsibilities. The fact that this is frequently met with resistance from FBEIs has been raised earlier. When states take over social services such as education, it means that FBOs lose an important means to show their importance to their constituencies. Moreover, it means a loss of income and political influence. Eventually, however, the ICCO Alliance views the state as finally responsible for education. It seeks to adhere to national curricula and regulations in the educational field, which is crucial so as to make sure that pupils and students can continue their education elsewhere and to have schools' efforts accredited by the relevant authorities.

During the process of transferring responsibilities, the ICCO Alliance envisions the role of FBEIs as follows:

- To restore formal and non-formal basic education;
- To renovate schools;
- To train teachers and school officials;
- To offer psychosocial counselling;
- To increasingly encourage local, regional, and national governments to take over responsibility for the educational sector;
- To stimulate effective cooperation between authorities, communities, and schools;
- To facilitate education for peace and human rights, in order to build a basis for long-lasting reconciliation, stability and development.
- To stimulate reconciliation, cooperation and dialogue between former adversaries through mixed classes and parent-teacher associations;
- To promote quality and inclusive education;
- To assist in curriculum development;
- To encourage policy makers to look beyond the stage of basic education and develop appropriate vocational training and job opportunities.

FBEIs distinguish themselves from secular NGOs by:

- Relying on longstanding experience in service provision and embedding in local communities;

- Call on spiritually-informed concepts of reconciliation, forgiveness, and healing;
- Facilitate intra- and interreligious dialogue on issues of violence and segregation;
- Offering moral and spiritual support;

Activating a well-embedded and extensive network of religious organisations and authorities to advance, distribute and monitor the distribution of development aid;

Eventually, the ICCO Alliance encourages its partner organisations to transfer its educational responsibilities to state institutions. Although this is frequently met with resistance, it does not imply that FBEIs should be closed down in due course. Instead, they continue to play a role by:

- Monitoring and lobbying for quality and inclusive education;
- Addressing sexual and gender-based violence and violent masculinities;
- Promoting interreligious cooperation and tolerance;
- Supporting marginalised groups;
- Promoting democratisation, justice and human rights issues.

### *International cooperation*

Western donors such as the ICCO Alliance play a vital role in enabling FBEIs in fragile states to engage in the educational sector. During the interviews with ICCO Alliance representatives, it was articulated that sharing a Christian background (or 'language' or being 'soul mates') offers a strong basis to engage in partnerships and promotes trust and dialogue on equal grounds. Cooperating with FBOs also involves engaging in a network that is well-embedded in local communities, which facilitates effective interventions at the grass root level. Most ICCO Alliance members prefer not to directly collaborate with churches, since their agenda generally differs from the development perspective as adopted by the ICCO Alliance. Cooperation with development branches of churches, however, is appreciated.

Collaboration with non-Christian FBOs and FBEIs is also perceived as fruitful. Experience in Indonesia, Afghanistan, and Pakistan has shown that Muslim FBOs often prefer cooperating with faith donors over secular agencies, since secularism is a force that is hardly understood or positively valued. Sharing a background of Bible and Quran is a basis for mutual understanding. Additionally, the traditional Western reluctance to collaborate with FBOs seems unjust, as religious values mostly overlap with secular human rights discourse. Dutch FBOs and RNGOs can play important roles in supporting processes of conflict transformation. Woord en Daad defines their responsibilities in chronological order as first, creating security and stability; second, developing a vital civil society; third, arriving at a certain level of economic development; and fourth, achieving a certain level of education and literacy. The ICCO Alliance characterises its roles as strategic financier, broker (connecting the right people, organisations and businesses to generate added value), capacity developer, and advancer of constituency, participation and lobby.<sup>81</sup> These roles are reflected in the following actions:

- Allocating sustained funding to partner organisations;
- Providing relief aid and expertise in life skill training;
- Connecting representatives from various organisations to exchange expertise and best practices;

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<sup>81</sup> More information on the roles of the ICCO Alliance: <http://iccoalliance-progapproach.pbworks.com>.

- Lobbying and advocacy on local, regional, and national levels, as well as in training partner NGOs to acquire effective lobby and advocacy strategies. ICCO Alliance members have experienced that joint lobby efforts by FBOs are more successful, particularly when lobby groups involve representatives from different religious denominations. It has been noted that local development initiatives should be accompanied by lobby on higher levels, preferably by Dutch diplomatic representatives.
- Offering specialist educational know-how and organising workshops and conferences to discuss pertinent themes such as inclusive education and gender inequalities;
- Offering capacity building programmes that allow FBOs to monitor and enhance democratic processes by engaging in e.g. election monitoring;
- Assisting in thorough context analysis that serves as a basis for defining needs and priorities for development initiatives. Accordingly, not only the immediate, but also the structural causes of conflict are addressed, including the role of religion and religious actors.
- Stimulating inter-faith dialogue and cooperation, which is very advantageous to processes of conflict transformation. As such, the religious identity of ICCO Alliance members becomes a tangible asset rather than a complicating factor, and may complement and strengthen development initiatives by other (secular) NGOs or governments.
- Mobilising religious communities to engage in inter-faith dialogue, and to encourage religious authorities to speak out against violence and enmity and in favour of peace and reconciliation. Dutch NGOs with a religious background are particularly successful in this role. Since religious authorities can draw on large popular support in non-Western societies, their efforts to facilitate conflict transformation may well be more successful than attempts by secular leaders.

#### *FBEIs and peacebuilding*

FBEIs draw on religious resources that are particularly powerful in motivating people to continue working under difficult and violent circumstances. In partnerships between Western development agencies and partners in the South, too, a religious background that is rooted in notions of compassion and fraternity among the haves and the have-nots, tends to favour a long-term commitment and a willingness to overcome initial difficulties.

Since conflict transformation is a long-term process that involves social, cultural, political, and economic elements, it is vital for development agencies to remain committed to particular projects over an extended period of time and foster a strong sense of ownership within local communities. From this research, it appears that faith-based actors are particularly equipped for such efforts. Hence, by involving FBOs and FBEIs in peacebuilding programmes and dispatching the responsibility for maintenance and accountability to such actors, the long-term nature of these efforts is more likely guaranteed than by transferring responsibilities to state or secular actors, since the latter's interests tends to shift away from localities more quickly as soon as a project targets have been achieved.

When operating in Islamic contexts such as Afghanistan, local communities seem to be more eager to cooperate with Christian organisations than with secular ones. From interviews with ICCO Alliance representatives it came forward that inter-religious differences may be more easily conceived and overcome than religious-secular divides, which are perceived as evidently foreign and thus evoking senses of paternalism. The degree to which



a Christian image should be explicitly upheld in predominantly non-Christian contexts is a yet undetermined issue within the ICCO Alliance.

## 6.2 Limitations of this research

Limitations that apply to this research include:

- Since local FBEIs could not be consulted due to the nature of the desk study, their views and reflections on the above conclusions have been left out. In a future research, their views will be highly appreciated, just as the perspectives of the actual beneficiaries of education in fragile states. Accordingly, a more elaborate analysis of the roles and responsibilities of FBEIs in conflict transformation can be attained.
- The fact that most ICCO Alliance partner organisations have a Christian background, offers little ground for comparative analysis with non-Christian or secular institutions. The prior synthesis report<sup>82</sup> also recommends conducting a similar, preferably longitudinal study, for example on *madrasas* and Islamic FBEIs. This is particularly pertinent in settings where religion is a politically sensitive factor, and should include a focus on the negative roles of FBEIs.
- The definitions of religion as adopted by the synthesis report as well as many of the sources of the current research rely on Western perceptions of religion (often conceptualised as the 'role' that religion plays in a society), which may not reflect local understandings and meanings of religion and the sacred. Contextualising concepts and motivations is fundamental to gain insight into complex subjects such as the relationship between the religious background of FBEIs and the impact of their efforts. In order to advance the sustainability of development interventions and cooperate on a basis of equality, Western development organisations will have to navigate between their own perceptions of religion and development, and the perspectives of the communities that they cooperate with in the South, so as to generate a common ground of 'mutual respect and co-responsibility'<sup>83</sup> for current and prospective partnerships.

It may be useful to distinguish four elements that comprise religion: religious ideas (the content of belief), religious practices (ritual behaviour), social organisation (the religious community), and religious – or spiritual – experiences (psychic attitudes).<sup>84</sup>

## 6.3 Recommendations, discussion, and openings for further research

The literature and desk study has produced numerous recommendations. The order in which they are presented is: (1) FBEIs and education, (2) FBEIs and religion, and (3) FBEIs and conflict transformation in fragile states.

### *FBEIs and education*

1. Schooling is subject to particular socio-cultural, historical, and political conditions. The role of FBEIs in conflict transformation is therefore highly context-dependent. Supporting FBEIs in fragile states should be based upon a careful context analysis that at least address the following elements:
  - How partner organisations envision the aims of schooling, and to what extent these intentions resemble the aspirations of the receiving communities on the one hand,

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<sup>82</sup> Verbeek 2008.

<sup>83</sup> See also Verbeek 2008, p. 29.

<sup>84</sup> See Ter Haar and Busuttill 2005: 22.

and ICCO Alliance policy on the other. Establishing secular schools in communities that deem religious education of paramount importance is not only ethically problematic, but may also prove ineffective in terms of school attendance, local ownership, and sustainability.

- How schooling is historically embedded in a particular institutional context. How does this influence perceptions of, and attitudes towards, education in general, and towards specific forms of schooling (such as religious, peace, girls', or inclusive education) in particular? Supporting educational projects that lack popular support, such as state or secular education in settings where churches have long been responsible for schooling, may be unsustainable. On the other hand, establishing alternative forms of education may as well be a means to empower marginalised communities.
  - How partner organisations are embedded in local, regional, and national power networks. Supporting parties that have a particular political agenda, besides an educational function, may have undesirable and destabilising effects. FBEIs in (post-) conflict countries should be keenly aware of the relationship between education and politics and be able to mitigate attempts at instilling certain ideologies in school populations. When engaging in partnerships with FBEIs, a context analysis should outline the fields of power, as well as their prospects for change during processes of conflict transformation.
2. The dual character of education in conflict-affected settings is problematic: as outlined in section 3.1, schooling may render peace inducing effects on society, but may also reinforce and enhance segregation and friction. Yet, no academic studies exist that indicate how education's drawbacks may be fruitfully mitigated. Research in the field of peace education<sup>85</sup> shows that 'the development of stable peace is fundamentally a learning process'<sup>86</sup> and education, therefore, a structural means to address violent attitudes and foster a peaceful society. Still, most of these studies lack a focus on the peculiarities of learning processes in settings of violent conflict, which involve cultural, social, and cognitive elements. In-depth research into the ways in which hostility and violence are produced or moderated at schools, and how this affects the attitudes that children and educators acquire overtime, would be highly valuable,<sup>87</sup> just as an examination of the function of religion and religious authorities in learning processes and environments in fragile states. Questions on this subject include:
- a. How are conflict transformation programmes implemented by teachers?
  - b. How do FBEIs activate available knowledge on peace education?
  - c. How do pupils incorporate durable notions of peace and reconciliation in their worldviews?
  - d. How are religious values employed in peace education programmes at single- and multi-faith schools?
  - e. What role do religion and religious authorities play in processes of teaching and learning?
  - f. How do secular and religious conflict transformation programmes, or various religious programmes (Christian, Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist), differ from each other?

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<sup>85</sup> E.g. Raviv *et al.* 1999; Vriens 2004; Bekerman and McGlyn 2007.

<sup>86</sup> Boulding in Ross 2005, p. 20; See also the Unesco motto 'since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed'.

<sup>87</sup> Cf. Winthrop and Kirk 2008; the author of this report is currently developing a PhD project on this subject.

Examining these queries in a future study would offer a valuable, bottom-up approach to answering the main research questions of this report.

3. Education is both a development and a political good. Parties involved in political and ideological conflicts seek to control the educational sector to extend their power basis. Also the rise of new religious movements or authorities may intensify quests for power and influence, and hence have an impact on the educational sector.
  - a. How do actors involved in conflict seek to control the educational sector?
  - b. How do FBEIs respond to these attempts?
  - c. How can international donors support FBEIs to withstand the politicisation of education?
  - d. How is the power context in which FBEIs operate addressed in current tools for context analysis?
4. How to integrate educational programmes by FBEIs with existing structures that are set by the government? In West-Uganda, for example, refugees from Congo can either be offered English-language programmes that connect to the Ugandan curriculum, or French-language programmes that prepare them for a return to French-speaking Congo. A similar predicament occurred in the context of Burmese refugees in Thailand. With regard to IDPs, this is usually less problematic.
  - a. How to anticipate on the future when developing educational projects?
  - b. How are future prospects being incorporated into context analysis tools?
  - c. How to respond to authorities that prohibit the erection of school buildings or peacebuilding activities (as in Darfur)?
5. In post-colonial contexts, where states take over responsibilities in the educational sector at the cost of FBOs, the latter may 'play the religious card to convince donors of the relevance of a continued financial commitment'.
  - a. What stance do ICCO Alliance members take in such circumstances? Is supporting state education the ultimate aim, or assisting FBOs that are considered of the same family?
  - b. How does the ICCO Alliance define the roles of FBEIs and state institutions in the educational sector?
  - c. Do the members of the Alliance agree on pursuing to transfer educational responsibilities to the state as soon as possible or in a particular stage of conflict transformation, even when partner organisations object?
  - d. Should there be a common policy or increased attention to the responsibilities of the various actors involved at the time of establishing partnerships?
6. In fragile states like Sudan, where state service provision is absent, ICCO chooses to implement educational measures itself, although this is outside its official mandate.
  - a. Under what circumstances is such action approved?
  - b. Is an exception in the case of fragile state justified, or even required?
  - c. What can be expected from governments in fragile states, and how can this be communicated effectively towards the authorities concerned?
7. In (post-)conflict settings, such as South Sudan, there is often a need for psychosocial support and psychological counselling.
  - a. How are communities affected on social, cultural, and psychological grounds by contemporary violent conflicts?
  - b. The ICCO Alliance has little expertise in this field. How can expertise be enhanced?
  - c. Which other organisations operate in this field?

8. In some countries, teachers view children as empty-headed beings that should just be flooded with information.
  - a. How to promote a child-centred and child-friendly school environment in war-affected countries?
  - b. How to effectively enhance child-centred methodologies of teaching?
  - c. How to deal with a diverse population of pupils?

#### *FBEIs and religion*

9. In non-Western contexts, FBOs act as vital catalysts of change and development and can rely on extensive popular support. The ICCO Alliance may capitalise on these widely acknowledged merits of FBOs, but should at the same time be cautious about potential pitfalls that academic literature has distinguished with regard to the religious element in the work of FBOs. Since religion is not only a source of psychological strength and motivation, but also a sensitive element in fragile settings, the roles and responsibilities of FBEIs must be examined context-specifically. Academic sources raise concerns over some Christian donor and development agencies that strongly draw on the notion of compassion with the underprivileged. Next to serving as a reservoir of motivation and dedication, compassion also entails a problematic potential when it obstructs the analysis of people's real needs and a careful assessment of the impact of programmes. As such, compassion-based development cooperation may satisfy the provider of aid but do no good to local communities. Moreover, it may strengthen religiously informed social segregation and inequality. Hence, it is advised to strictly separate religious motives and the impact of development projects. Since some of the ICCO Alliance members explicitly operate on the basis of compassion and exclusively cooperate with Christian partner organisations, this subject could and should be a matter of concern.

Yet, it has been stressed that each ICCO Alliance partner organisation is selected on the basis of professionalism and provides education to all, irrespective of religious, ethnic, or political background. Additionally, it has been argued that, in many countries, it is fully acceptable to ventilate religious beliefs. Departing from these observations, an examination of the ways in which compassion plays out in practice and how sentiments of proselytisation are locally perceived will be interesting.

10. Both at the 2008 conference of the Knowledge Centre Religion and Development and in academic literature it is stressed that excluding parties from peace talks often works unproductively. Religious communities should not be approached as monoliths. Talking to 'moderates' who are linked to organisations that are perceived as radical, may well have an impact on followers and on 'conservative' members as well.
11. Inter-religious cooperation between FBOs has not yet been extensively researched. Benedetti assumes that, by interreligious collaboration, FBOs can 'maximise their beneficial impact and minimise the overlap and wasting of resources'. In addition, interreligious cooperation could ease tensions in areas where religious traditions are mixed, and enhance the legitimacy of NGOs and their programmes. FBOs most suited for cooperation, Benedetti argues, are 'secular' Christian organisations (who embody a low religious pervasiveness in their membership and mission) and moderate Islamic NGOs (who do not request a total commitment to Islam from their members or employees, and do not distinguish between Muslim and non-Muslim beneficiaries of aid).<sup>88</sup> However

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<sup>88</sup> Benedetti 2006.

promising, these assumption need further scrutiny in order to be able to evaluate the practice and effectiveness of interreligious cooperation.

- a. How do communities in (post-)conflict areas perceive the religious identity of FBEIs and their Western supporters?
  - b. How is religious identity communicated in the work of FBEIs, both in religiously homogenic and heterogenic environments?
  - c. Would intra- or interreligious dialogue offer a channel to negotiate with 'conservative' forces in religious movements?
  - d. How may international development agencies and donors effectively support FBEIs in such attempts?
  - e. Does talking exclusively to moderate or liberal representatives of religious constituencies weaken their legitimacy and support?
12. In most non-Western countries, attaining secular principles of development is ineffective since religion persuades all aspects of life, including politics and development. Red een Kind notes that secularism can not be regarded 'neutral' as opposed to faith-based development initiatives. FBOs and RNGOs are clear at pointing out their background and motivations, while the motivations and strategies of secular development NGOs generally remain more implicit. Accordingly, it is argued, faith-based partnerships are established on more equal grounds.
- a. How can religion be discussed in meaningful ways with partner organisations?
  - b. Are partner organisations in the South sensitive to ways in which donors and international development agencies pronounce their religious or cultural background?
  - c. Do humanistic organisations share certain qualities with FBOs?
13. It may be difficult for FBOs to acknowledge the potential disparaging role of religion. Moreover, certain religious communities (e.g. Pentecostals, independent African churches, and some Islamic communities) do not have a central leadership, which may impede cooperation and result in 'blind spots' for development workers.
- a. How may this be avoided?
  - b. How to distinguish between polarising religious leaders and authorities and those that bring people together.
14. All ICCO Alliance members have stressed to prefer engaging in partnerships with organisations that share their Protestant Christian background. Nevertheless, approaches differ as to which organisations are elective as partners: ICCO excludes collaborating directly with churches and increasingly cooperates with non-Christian partners, while Red een Kind and Woord en Daad cooperate exclusively with Christian NGOs.
- a. How is the role of religion defined within the identity and policy guidelines of the ICCO Alliance?
  - b. Should there be a common policy towards cooperating with non-Christian FBOs?
  - c. What role should religion play in establishing and maintaining partnerships?
  - d. Should this role be formalised, and at which level?
  - e. Should Quran classes be allowed in ICCO Alliance supported programmes that are implemented by Christian partner organisations?
  - f. How does the role of religion change in the course of the decentralisation process as currently performed by ICCO and others?

15. In Indonesia, where 95 percent of the population is Muslim, supporting Christian schools may have adverse effects, such as maintaining small Christian elites at the cost of mainstreaming quality education for all, sustaining post-colonial dependencies, and fuelling religious tensions. On the other hand, churches supporting each other may also be considered valuable. How to position yourself in this spectre between a 'rights-based' and a 'value-based' approach?
16. 'Conservative' stances may prevail among churches and FBEIs, particularly with regard to issues such as homosexuality and HIV/Aids, which was also mentioned in the synthesis report.<sup>89</sup> Education can play an important role in raising awareness around HIV/Aids and promoting measures to prevent its spread. How, then, should sensitive issues be addressed in partnership relationships? Should we look for common principles in partnerships, instead of stressing dissimilarities? Or depict engaging in dialogue with conservative religious representatives as an opportunity to address certain standpoints?
17. Besides taking their responsibility towards local people, churches and FBOs also have the responsibility to address fundamental injustices, undemocratic political systems, discrepancies between poor and rich, corruption, etcetera. 'Some FBOs appreciate the comfortable position they are in but avoid addressing problematic issues.' Supporting them may equal sustaining a status-quo that is undesirable, despite the fact that some of their efforts also work for the good.

#### *FBEIs and conflict transformation in fragile states*

18. It is argued that FBEIs, and FBOs in general, display a relative longstanding commitment to development projects and partner organisations.
  - a. To what extent does this apply to the ICCO Alliance and its partners, compared to other Dutch religious, secular, or humanistic development agencies and donors? Bradley argues that this commitment, which is often based on Christian notions of compassion, is a source of local embedding and success for faith-based development projects. However, it also poses the risks of ignoring the actual needs of local communities and failing to critically assess project results.
  - b. How does this critique apply to ICCO Alliance members and their partners?
  - c. Is this issue internally discussed?
  - d. Would there be a need to counterbalance this image of FBOs?
19. ICCO/Kia's programme in South Sudan<sup>90</sup> has met several constraints that relate to operating in fragile and conflict-ridden contexts. Most of these are related to the non-self implementing nature of the programme, and thus depend on the weak civil society structures that are currently present:
  - The lack of capacities among local NGOs, as a result of which skills have to be imported from abroad, has time and cost implications and endangers ownership perceptions.
  - Working through local authorities and civil society organisations has been seriously hampering effective implementation.
  - Bad infrastructure and poor communication networks put constraints on development projects such as the building of schools.
  - Working in fragile states involves high operational costs.

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<sup>89</sup> Verbeek 2008, p. 27.

<sup>90</sup> ICCO 2007.

- The demand for quality education cannot be met as a consequence of a scarcity of trained teachers who were expected to return from elsewhere in the country upon the end of the conflict, but who decide to await the improvement of services first.<sup>91</sup>

A Tearfund report<sup>92</sup> on the health sector in South Sudan recommends to:

- Develop the skills development component of the programme in such a way that it also contributes to the achievement of the programme itself – e.g. by integrating skills development and the construction of schools.
- Continue working through local authorities and civil society organisations, but seek ways to decrease dependency on their capacity and meanwhile more substantially work on their capacity building. The latter through involving (new) capacity building partners both at the LGA side (e.g. SNV) and at the CBO side (e.g. ICCO CADEP programme). Decreased dependency on local stakeholder's capacities can be realised by also involving (semi-) international implementing partners, while meanwhile keeping the local stakeholders also on board. Furthermore, programme management should experiment with taking on a more direct role in programme implementation without becoming an implementer itself (e.g. self contracting a construction company instead of contracting such a company through a weak local NGO).
- Readjust programme planning and budget to accommodate the challenges in accessibility and the high construction costs.
- Actively seek new/ additional implementing partners.
- Lobby for salary payments. Programme impact on is going to hinge on there being an accountable local government administration in place and salary payments made to the teachers throughout the County. The fact is that there is a demand for accessible and quality education in the area CPA. Strengthening the service provision will encourage the returns of all the refugees and the internally displaced. However, a substantial lobbying on the national and state levels on prioritising salary payment to all teachers is very much needed for the project to be sustainable.

20. In his recent dissertation, Dirk-Jan Koch argues that development agencies tend to flock in regions characterised by limited risks and high visibility. In countries like Tanzania, twenty times more money is spent than in Central African Republic. Partly, this is due to the dependence of international development agencies on government funding that prioritises particular 'donor darlings'. Other reasons for not involving in certain states are the lack trained personnel and expertise, and bad infrastructure. Koch argues that development agencies should take their responsibility by not longer avoiding less-attractive sites of operation and by enhancing mutual cooperation and coordination.<sup>93</sup> Is the ICCO Alliance willing and ready to address the challenges related to operating in fragile states, including high operational costs, human resource constraints, poor communication networks, and limited visibility?<sup>94</sup>

21. Executive capacities of partner organisations are regularly overestimated. The legitimacy of local NGOs depends on whether they are able to make a tangible difference and prove careful spending of money towards their constituencies and donors. Only few NGOs in the South can implement programmes according to ICCO standards of planning, evaluation, and accountability. As a result, ICCO's programme in South Sudan relies on its

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<sup>91</sup> Tearfund 2007.

<sup>92</sup> Tearfund 2007.

<sup>93</sup> Koch 2009. See also [http://www.ru.nl/english/general/radboud\\_university/vm/aid\\_organizations/](http://www.ru.nl/english/general/radboud_university/vm/aid_organizations/).

<sup>94</sup> See also Tearfund 2007.

own field office in Juba and on increasingly collaborating with agencies such as SNV, instead of local NGOs. This problem may be a general characteristic of FBOs that operate in fragile states and should be discussed.

22. ZOA noted difficulties with regard to recruiting staff that is willing to work in fragile states. Currently, Afghanistan is a non-family country, while North Sudan and Myanmar pose difficulties to family situations. How to deal with this problem?
23. Do you really share a language, if you share a religious background? How does this apply to issues such as accountability? Is there one way (the ICCO Alliance way) or also an 'Afghan way' of accountability (as was raised during the November 2008 conference of the Knowledge Centre Religion and Development)? 'Accountability in religious settings covered with the cloak of charity. First fraternity, then accountability.' To what extent is this acceptable?
24. The concept of 'fragile states' is contestable since it is imposed on states by foreign countries and thus implies an inequality. Woord en Daad recommends to speak of situations of fragility, which are more open to change and more respectful to inhabitants of receiving states.
25. In Darfur, for example, it is prohibited to erect school buildings. How to deal with difficulties in cooperation with authorities?
26. In-depth context analyses are considered crucial for the success of development interventions. In fragile states, conducting such study is complex and sometimes unsafe. As a result, not all stakeholders may be consulted, and a thorough understanding of structural causes of conflict may be unachievable. Here looms the danger of misunderstanding and simplification that is raised by academics. In context analyses, the role of religion in development and conflict should be considered.<sup>95</sup> This is hard under volatile circumstances or repressing authorities, such as in Myanmar. 'Conflict analysis needs to be more thorough, in-depth and detailed and should explicitly inform strategy and policies. It is advised to do so in close consultation with the partners, possible through a workshop with all partners at the national levels'.<sup>96</sup> How to effectively draft a context analyses in fragile states?
27. How to measure the impact of programmes in fragile states, where progress may be slow? Which indicators can be adopted?
28. How can the role of FBOs and FBEIs as 'agents of change' be effectively defined in relation to government donors? Hereto, enhanced insight into the ways in which MinBuZa defines and approaches religion is required. It should be stressed that value-based approaches and human rights perspectives overlap to a great extent. Moreover, it should be explored how diplomatic posts may enhance cooperation with FBOs.<sup>97</sup>
29. Conflict transformation and peacebuilding programmes may face a dilemma with regard to opting for a reconciliation perspective or a justice approach. These dilemmas pertain to schooling and curriculum formation as well. Often, churches tend to stress reconciliation, while human rights organisations propose a justice approach. An exclusive focus on reconciliation could entail continued impunity, whereas a justice approach could sustain conflict. Churches sometimes propose processes of truth-telling, but this, too, offers problems, since truth is often rather subjective. Sometimes, traditional means

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<sup>95</sup> The Israeli representative at the November 2008 conference argued that 'the Oslo Peace Treaty failed because 'God was not included'.

<sup>96</sup> ICCO & Kerk in Actie 2008b, p. 26.

<sup>97</sup> Cf. Knowledge Forum Religion and Development Cooperation.



of dealing with conflict can be reinforced. Ideally, a mix of these various elements is promoted. How could this be achieved?

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## **List of acronyms**

EFA	Education for All
FBO	Faith-based organisation
FBEI	Faith-based educational institution
ICCO/Kia	Interchurch Organisation for Development Cooperation
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
RNGO	Religious Non-Governmental Organisation
UN	United Nations
VISOR	VU Institute for the Study of Religion, Culture, and Society

## Appendix 1 Resource Persons

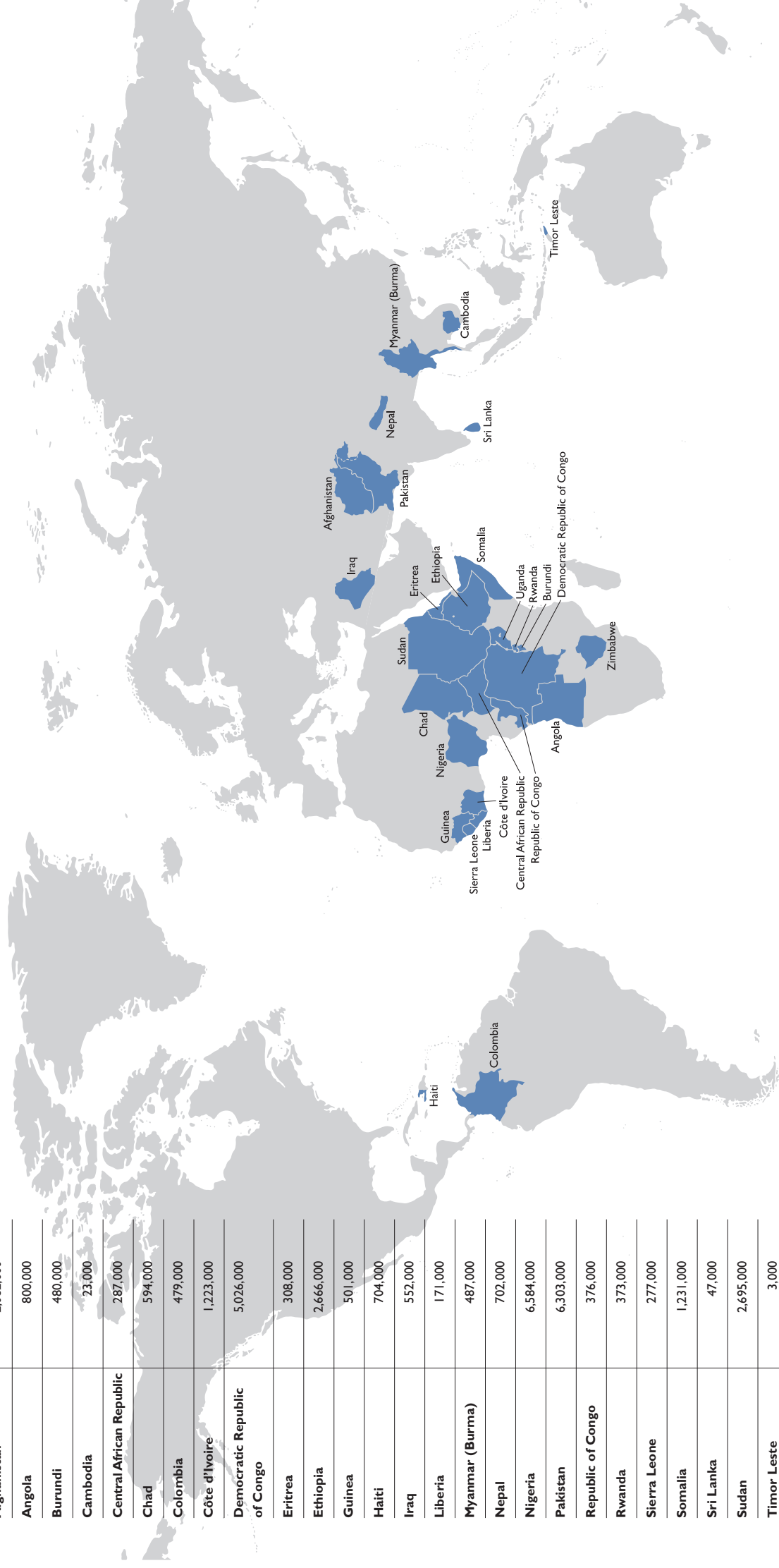
The following representatives of the ICCO Alliance have been interviewed in the context of this research:

<b>Name</b>	<b>Function</b>	<b>Organisation</b>
Tjeerd de Boer	Programme Officer	Edukans
Paula Dijk	Programme Officer and Programme Specialist, Democratisation & Peacebuilding	ICCO/Kia
Ria van Hoewijk	Consultant Education	IC/Consult
Willeke Meindertsma	Policy Officer	ZOA Refugee Care
Evert Jan Pierik	Programme Officer	ZOA Refugee Care
Agnes Schaafsma	Programme Officer Education	Red een Kind
Kees de Ruiter	Learning facilitator and Programme Specialist, Democratisation & Peacebuilding	ICCO/Kia
Marika de Kloe	Head Education Programme	Woord en Daad
Machteld Ooijens	Programme Specialist Education	ICCO/Kia

# Conflict-affected fragile states

Country	Number of primary-aged children out of school
<b>Afghanistan</b>	2,082,000
<b>Angola</b>	800,000
<b>Burundi</b>	480,000
<b>Cambodia</b>	23,000
<b>Central African Republic</b>	287,000
<b>Chad</b>	594,000
<b>Colombia</b>	479,000
<b>Côte d'Ivoire</b>	1,223,000
<b>Democratic Republic of Congo</b>	5,026,000
<b>Eritrea</b>	308,000
<b>Ethiopia</b>	2,666,000
<b>Guinea</b>	501,000
<b>Haiti</b>	704,000
<b>Iraq</b>	552,000
<b>Liberia</b>	171,000
<b>Myanmar (Burma)</b>	487,000
<b>Nepal</b>	702,000
<b>Nigeria</b>	6,584,000
<b>Pakistan</b>	6,303,000
<b>Republic of Congo</b>	376,000
<b>Rwanda</b>	373,000
<b>Sierra Leone</b>	277,000
<b>Somalia</b>	1,231,000
<b>Sri Lanka</b>	47,000
<b>Sudan</b>	2,695,000
<b>Timor Leste</b>	3,000
<b>Uganda</b>	1,151,000
<b>Zimbabwe</b>	429,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>36,554,000</b>

Source: UNESCO 2007; UIS database;  
UNICEF 2008 unpublished data



Conflict-affected fragile states